

SUBJECTION  
TO  
Christ

IN ALL HIS  
ORDINANCES,  
AND

APPOINTMENTS,  
The best means to preserve our  
LIBERTY.

Together with a  
TREATISE

Of *Ineffectual Hearing the Word*;  
How we may know whether we have heard  
the same effectually: And by what means it may  
be come effectual unto us,  
With some remarkable Passages of his life.

By *Tho. Shephard*, late Pastor of the Church  
of Christ in *Cambridge in New-England*.  
Now published by *Mr. Jonathan Michell*  
Pastor of the said Church in *New-England*.

MATTH. 11. 29. *Take my yoke upon you, &c.*

London, Printed by T. R. & E. M. for *John Rothwell* at  
the Sun and Fountain in *Pauls Church-yard*: 1652.

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## To the READER.



Ne of the sweetest refreshing mercies of God, to his New-England People, amidst all their wildernesse-tryals, and straits, and sorrowes, where-with they at first conflicted in those ends of the earth, hath been their Sanctuary-enjoyments, in the beauties of holinesse, where they have seen and met with him whom their soules love, and had familiar and full converse with him; above what they could then enjoy in the land from whence they came. This is that hat hath sweetned many a bitter Cup to the remnant of Israel. The Lord alone led him, and there was no strange God with him, was said concerning Israel of old, and this was accounted mercy enough when he led them into a land where no man dwelt, and which no man passed thorough. What God hath done for New-England in this respect, and what their Sanctuary mercies be, thou hast here a taste; though but a taste. These notes may well be thought to be lesse accurate, then if the Author himself had published them, and to want some polishments and trimmings, which it were not fit for any other to add; however

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thou wilt finde them full of useful truths, and mayest easily discern his Spirit, and a Spirit above his own breathing in them.

Concerning the Author; it were worth the while to write the story of his life.

It is needlesse to speak in his commendation, His works praise him in the gates. They that know him, know he had as real apprehensions of the things of God, and lived as much with God, and with his own heart, and more then the most of Christians do. He had his education at Immanuel-Colledge in Cambridge. The Conversion and Change of his heart was wrought betimes. When he lived in the University, and enjoyed Dr. Prestons Ministry, whereby God had the very best and strength of his parts and yeares for himself. When he was first awakened to look after Religion, having before swam quietly in the stream of the times, he was utterly at a losse which way to take, being much molested with suggestions of Atheisme, (in the depths whereof Junius was quite lost for a time) and moved and tempted to the wayes of Familisme also; for some advised him in this condition to go to Grindlestone, & to hear M<sup>r</sup>. Brierley, and being informed that the people were wont to finde a mighty possessing, over-powering presence and work of the spirit when they heard him, he resolved upon the journey; but God in mercy diverted him, having reserved him for better things. Let he read what they said, and the books of H. N. amongst

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amongst the rest, where meeting with this passage, That a Christian is so swallow'd up in the Spirit, that what action soever the Spirit moves him to, suppose Whoredom, he may do it, and it is no sin to him; this was enough: for being against the light of his natural conscience, it bred in him an utter abhorrency of those loose and vile wayes and principles ever after. This advantage also he had, that Doctor Tuckney was then his Tutor, whom he acquainted with his condition, and had his direction and help in those miserable fluctuations and straits of his soul. Happy is the man whose doubtings end in establishments, nil tam certum, quam quod de dubio certum. but when men arrive in Scepticism, as the last issue and result of all their debates and thoughts of heart about Religion, it had been good for such if they had never been borne.

11-N

Tuckney

After his heart was changed, it was observed of him that his abilities of minde were also much enlarged, divinity though it be chiefly the Art and rule of the will, yet raising and perfecting the understanding also; which I conceive came to passe chiefly by this means, that the feare of God fixed him, and made him serious, and taught him to meditate, which is the maine improvement of the understanding. Therefore such as came to him for direction about their studies, he would often advise them to be much in meditation, professing that having spent some time in meditation every day

## To the Reader.

in his beginning times, and written down his thoughts; he saw cause now to blesse God for it. He was assigned to the worke of the Minister at a solemn meeting and conference of sundry godly Ministers about it, there were to the number of twelve present at the meeting, whose solempne advise was that he should serve the Lord in the Gospel of his Sonne; wherein they have been the salvation of many a soul: for upon this he addrest himself to the work, with that reality and seriousness in wooing and winning sou's, that his words made deep impressions, and seldome or never fell to the ground.

He was lecturer a while at Earles-come in Essex (which I take it was the first place of his Ministry) where he did much good, and the people there, though now it is long since and many are gone, yet they have a very precious & and deep remembrance of him, of the mighty power of Goa by him to this day. But W. Lawd then Bishop of London soon stopt his mouth, and drove him away, & he did many other godly Ministers from Essex at the same time. After this he lived at Butter-chrome in Yorkshire, at Sir Richard Darleys house, till the iniquity of those times hunted him thence also. Then he went to Northumberland till silenced there also; and being thus molested and chased up and down at home, he fled to New-England, and after some difficulties and delays, by great stormes and disasters at sea upon the sands and coasts

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coasts of Yarmouth, which retarded his voyage till another yeare, he arrived there at last; where he was Pastor to a precious flock at Cambridge about fourteen yeares. He was but 46. or 47. yeares old when he dyed. His sicknesse began with a sore throate, and then a squinancy, and then a fever, wherof he dyed August 23. 1649. This was one thing he said upon his death-bed, Lord, I am vile, but thou art righteous; and to those that were about him, he bade them love Iesus Christ dearly, that little part that I have in him, is no smal comfort to me now.

His manner of preaching was close and searching, and with abundance of affection and compassion to his hearers. He took great paines in his preparations for his publick labours, accounting it a cursed thing to do the work of the Lord negligently; and therefore spending usually two or three whole dayes in preparing for the work of the Sabbath, and having his sermons finished upon friday night; He hath sometime exprest himself thus in pullicke; "God  
"will curse that mans labours that lumbers  
"up and down in the world all the week,  
"and then upon Saturday in the afternoon  
"goes to his study, when as God knows  
"that time were little enough to pray and  
"weep in, and to get his heart in frame,  
&c. He affected plainnesse together with power in preaching, not seeking abstrusities, nor liking to hover and soare aloft in dark expressions, and so to shoot his arrowes (as many



## To the Reader.

Preachers, do ) over the heads of his hearers.

It is a wretched stumbling block to some, that his Sermons are somewhat strict, and (as they terme it) legal: some souls can relish none but m<sup>al</sup>-mouth'd Preachers, who come with soft and smooth, and toothles Words, byssina verba byssinis viris: But these times need humbling Ministeries, and blessed be God that there are any; for where there are no Law-Sermons, there will be few Gospel-lives, and were there more Law-preaching in England by the men of gifts, there would be more Gospel-walking both by themselves and the People. To preach the Law, not in a forc'd affected manner, but wisely and powerfully, together with the Gospel, as Christ him'self was wont to do (Mat. 5. and else where) is the way to carry on all three together, sense of misery, the application of the remedy, and the returnes of thankfulness and duty. Nor is any doctrine more comforting then this humbling way of God, if rightly managed.

It is certain the foundations of after-sorrows and ruines to the Church, have ever been laid in the dayes of her prosperity, and peace, and rest, when she injoyes all her pleasant things. This the watchmen of Israel should foresee, and therefore what should they do but seek to humble and awaken, and search and melt mens hearts, and warne every one night and day with teares, that in the day of  
their

## To the Reader.

their peace, they may not sinne away the things of their Peace. There are therefore three requests; which we would desire to beg of God, with bended knees for England, to perpetuate the present prosperity and peace thereof; and let us commend them to the mourning and praying ones amongst us, that they would be the Lords remembrancers in these Petitions.

I. A right understanding and sober use of liberty. For when People come first out of bondage, they are apt to be not only somewhat fond of their liberties, but to wax giddy and wanton with liberty, and instead of shaking off the bloody yokes of men, to cast off at least in part the Government and blessed yoke of Christ also. Hence it comes about that a day of rest from persecution, which should be a day of liberty to the Saints to serve God, may become a day of great seduction, and of liberty to seducing Spirits, to deceive, and damne, and mislead them from the truthes and wayes of God. But the machinations of men, though in conjunction with the powers and gates of bell, shall certainly fall at last before Truth and Prayer. And of this is the first Treatise which is seasonably publish't.

To be fast bound to the rule with all the bonds and cords of God and Man is the Perfection of liberty. Hence there is not a surer Corner-stone of ruine to a Christian Commonwealth, that God will break them with unparallel'd

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parallel'd destructions by some overflowing scourge, when the day of vengeance is in his heart, then to think that Religion is none of their Liberties, and yet how many somes of Belial, are there void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them, who imagine vain things, and say, Let us break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us? How do men run into extremes, either stretching and paring every one to the Gyants bed, and thereby denying liberty to the Saints to serve him, according to the measure of their stature in Christ, or else on the other hand opening the door so wide, as to plead for liberty to all the disguised enemies and sins against Christ, thereby instead of uniting the Saints in one, endeavouring through a dreadful mistake to unite Christ and Belial? It is a sad thing when a man is come to this passe, that he is not able to resolve his conscience whether Baal be God, or the Lord be God, and therefore would not have the worshippers of Baal punished, for fear lest Baal should be God. Is liberty nothing but indifferency & irresolution of spirit in the things of God? wo to the valley of vision, even to a sinful Nation laden with iniquity, and led away from the truth as it is in Jesus, and to the Host of the high ones that sit on high, in the day of his visitation, if this be the spirit of these times; for in the day when he visits, God will visit for these things.

2. That his Word, especially the Word of his

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his Gospel, may be precious and powerful, may run and be glorified in England. Alas! as there is much preaching, but few serious, few heart-breaking Sermons: so there is much hearing, but little effectual hearing. Men stand like the Oakes of Bashan, before the words of the God of Israel, no terror of the Lord, no newes of everlasting destruction, no evidence of the fierce anger of God upon them, which burnes down to the bottom of hell, can take hold upon their spirits, or awaken their consciences, to make inquiries after God in this their day; yea if the barres of the pit of hell were broken, and if the devils of hell should come flying up amongst us, in our solemn Assemblies, from the fiery corners of the Pit below, with everlasting burnings about their eares, and with chaines of darknesse rattling at their heels, they might fright men out of their wits perhaps, or from the acts of sin it may be for a time, but it would not work upon their hearts, their desperate, dead, besotted hearts. The fooles in Israel will have their swinge in their lusts, and go to hell in a full carriere, let God do his best. Oh the hardnesse of mens hearts! And the maine reason of it, is because they hear but a sound of words, but they do not hear the Lord in that Word: they hear words that are spoken by God, but they heare not, they see not God himself therein. If ever thou wouldest profit by reading or hearing, take every word as a special message to thee  
from

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from God; and of this fruitlesse bearing, and the rules of hearing aright is the other Treatise.

3. Conscience of his Sabbath. Of which there is an elaborate discourse of this Author, formerly published by himself. Therefore we shall adde no more. The blessing of heaven go with these, to make us a willing People in the day of his power, to submit to his Word, and to come under the wing of the Government of Jesus Christ, as esteeming these spiritual mercies our best mercies, our choicest and dearest liberties. If ever the Lord Jesus (which mercy forbid) should take his doleful and final farewell of the English nation, as when he laid the tomb-stone upon Jerusalem, such as these will be his mournings over us. Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and burnest them that are sent unto thee, as they did in the time of Popery, how often would I have gathered thy children together (by my Word and Spirit therein) even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under the wings (of my special Government and Protection?) but ye would not; behold your house is left unto you desolate. But the Lord who doth not only make the day dark with night, but also turneth the shadow of death into the morning, even the Lord avert these evils, and the Lord make the English nation his Hephzibah, & the land Beulah, which is the prayer of his Mourners in Sion, and of

Thy Servants in Jesus, and for  
Jesus sake,

William Greenhill.

Samuel Mather.





TO THE  
*Christian* READER.

**T**He precious memory of the Author of these ensuing Sermons, needs no reviving to any gracious heart, that had any knowledge of him. Yea the world knows in part (though but in a little part) by some pieces of his formerly printed (while he was yet with us) who this Author was, what it owes to God for him, and how justly it might sigh over his grave, with that of the Apostle, *Of whom the world was not worthy!* His praise throughout all the Churches, is farre above any addition by so mean a pen as writes these lines. But it is not fit that the first page of any thing published after his death (for I doubt not but his death is long ago publickly took notice of) should go without some witnesse of a mournfull

## To the Christian READER.

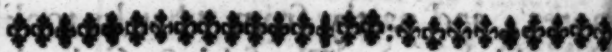
ful remembrance thereof, which indeed no tears can sufficiently lament. We who sometimes *sate under his shadow*, & were fed from God by him, (the poor flock of this *Shepherd*) among whom he lived, *testifying Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*; and whom he sometimes *exhorted, comforted and charged every one of us as a father doth his children*; we cannot but carry sorrow in the bottome of our hearts to this day, that we must here see his face no more. Neither do we believe that his losse remains with us alone, or only within the limits of this remote wilderness; the benefit (and consequently the want) of such a burning and shining Light, is of more general concernment then we easily apprehend, especially in this Age, wherein not only many sit in utter darkness, but which is more, the *new Light* thereof is darkness; and *the Love of many waxing cold*. But we must all be silent before Him, whose judgements are unsearchable. Neither may we presume to say to him, What doest thou?

## To the Christian READER.

It is instantly and not without cause desired by many, that such reliques of his Labours as do survive him, may be (at least some of them) imparted to the publick. To effect any thing considerable that way, is not an easie or sudden work. But this small piece being at present attained; it seemed not amiss to let it passe the Presse. These were some of his *Lecture-Sermons*, Preached most of them in the year 1641. They are now transcribed by a godly Brother, partly from the Authors own notes, and partly from what he took from his mouth. The subject (in both the Texts) is of great use, and needfull for these times; wherein there is more Liberty, then good use of it; and much more common and outward, then saving and effectual knowledge of the word of God. These posthumous editions are farre short of what the Author was wont to do, and of what the Sermons were in preaching. But though the sense be not every where so full, nor every thing so thorowly spoken to, nor the stile so good by farre, (as the  
Au-

*To the Christian* READER.

Authors manner was) yet the intelligent Reader will finde a precious treasure of truth in it, not fit to be buried or neglected. *The Prophets do not live for ever*, but their words do: The Lord make them such ever-living words as may take hold of all our hearts, not for judgement, but for mercy, for one of these wayes they shall live; yea, rise up at the last day.

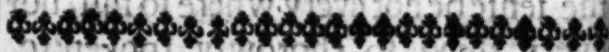


March 29.

1652.

*Imprimatur,*

EDM. CALAMY.





A wholesome *Caveat* for a  
time of LIBERTY.

2 CHRON. 12. 8.

*Nevertheless they shall be his ser-  
vants, that they may know my ser-  
vice, and the service of the king-  
doms of the Countrey.*



He greatest part of this Chap-  
ter is spent in setting down  
that famous Warre which  
*Shishak* King of *Egypt*  
made against *Rehoboam* King  
of *Judah*.

The cause of this War in regard of *Shi-  
shak* is not set down; probable conjectures  
there be: *Jeroboam* probably might be  
treacherous, who having a party in *E-  
gypt*, lest *Rehoboam* should grow too great,  
together with some other pretended  
wrongs, might awaken this Bear from his  
den; but in regard of God, you may see

B

the



the Reason set down, *Vers. 2. Because they had transgressed against the Lord.*

The time of this War is set down in the *1. Vers. When he had established the Kingdom by wholesome lawes, erecting Gods worship, and countenancing godly men, 2 Chro. 11. 16, 17. which continued three years, and strengthened himselfe by fortified places, and munition fit for war, as in the foregoing Chapter appears. Now when he had most peace and quiet, he and all Israel suddenly forsake the Lord, which was the fourth year; and in the fifth year comes Shishak, and with a mighty host wastes all before him untill he come to the chief City.*

Now in *Vers. the 5. and 6. is set downe the repentance of the people with their Princes especially. Shemajah, who no doubt had spoke against their idolatrous courses before, takes his season when they were low and tamed, and tells them the true cause of their misery, Vers. 5. Many sins there were in the Land, as Idolatry, and Whoredomes, &c. yet the venom was, They had forsaken the Lord: Let the sin be what it will be, yet let it be such a one as men forsake the Lord by it, that's the provocation; hereupon they humble themselves, some effectually, some hypocritically, yet all outwardly, and say the Lord is righteous; they extenuate not their sinne, they lay not the blame on man, no not on*  
*Shishak,*

*Shishak*, but see the Lord, justifie his proceedings, The Lord is righteous, we unrighteous, although it were more heavy then it is.

Now in the 7. Verse, and in the words read is set down the mitigation of Gods plague, and the moderation of his chastisement, *I will not poure out all my wrath, yet I think it not fit to shew perfect deliverance, I'll make them servants, to let them know,*

There are two parts in the words read.

1. The punishment or chastisement on *Judah* for forsaking the Lord, and backsliding from him, which is bondage and privation of the liberty they had, they must be *Shishaks* servants.

2. The Lords end, it was very gracious, *That they may know my service, &c.*  
For explication.

1. What is meant by service?

*Ans.* There are two things in service.

1. Government. 2. Subjection: cheerfull obedience to that government. Both the Hebrew word, as also the nature of the thing it selfe hath these two.

God sets up his government over a people, his people do or should subject cheerfully to this government; By my service is therefore meant my government, and your subjection wrought by me to this government.

2. *They shall know.*  
 1. Not by the knowledge of the brain, for that they know now, but knowledge of experience, as it's said in *Ezek. 6. ult.* When I shall have made the Land desolate in all their habitations, they shall know that I am the Lord. Now what shall they know of it?

*Ans.* The difference between them, the sorrow of the one, the sweet of the other; the misery of the one, and blessednesse of the other; the bondage of the one, and the liberty of the other.

There might be many things observed from the words, but I note only the generall.

*Doctr. I.*

*Obser.* That when any people of God forsake the Lord, and cast off his government over them; they provoke the Lord to put them under the bondage of another government. They that abuse Gods liberty must be under bondage; the Lord hath a Kingdome in this world most glorious; hence when men will not be under it, if they will not be ruled by him, they must be ruled by the whip; and if Christs laws cannot hinder, Christs chains must. *Ier. 5. 19.* And it shall come to passe when ye shall say, Wherefore doth the Lord all these things unto us? then shall thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not

*yours*

yours. Psal. 107. 10, 11. Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron, because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsell of the most high. Ezek. 20. 24, 25. Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and polluted my sabbaths, &c. Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgements whereby they should not live, &c. Zach. 11. 15, 16. And the Lord said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish Shepherd. Vers. 16. For lo I will raise up a shepherd in the land which shall not visit those that be cut off, nor seeke the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still, &c.

When people break covenant with God, and loath him, then saith the Lord, I will not feed, and then he sets over them Idol shepherds.

This is certain, when the soule will not subject it selfe to God, he goes about to subject God to him, say to his lusts. Isa. 43. 24. Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins. For one of them must stoop, and a man would have the Lord be mercifull, patient, and pittifull to him, when he is in league with his lusts, now this the Lord will not do: And hence, if he does not destroy him, he with-draws himself from serving of the creature, and hence other evils take hold of it, and bring it under. When A-

dam stood, and was for God, all creatures served him, and the riches of Gods goodnesse preserved him; the Lord communicated the sweet of his government, or service to him; but when he turned away from the right ways of God: Now if the Lord should serve him by governing of him in goodness, he should serve a lust; and bow to the creature, nay to a lust, which is a viler thing, then for one creature to fall downe and worship another. Therefore now hence it comes to passe, because the Lord will not be a servant to any mans lust, there must be some other government that must seize upon them. Hence set all the Saints in the Churches with their faces subjected to the Lord, his good will and righteous wayes, and then his goodness shall flow down upon them in and through Christ, for otherwise we have nothing to do with good, but when we are set right for God, *Hos. 2. 19.* *I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, in judgment, in loving kindnesse and mercy, &c.* The Lord will then command all creatures to be serviceable to his Church and people: *Verf. 21. 22.* But on the contrary misery must needs seize upon the soule that doth cast off the government of the Lord Jesus: Thus much for the generall explication of the point.

Now in particular. 1. What is this government



vernement or service of God?

2. What is that bondage he captivates his unto?

3. Why doth the Lord do thus?

*Quest. 1.* What is this government or service of God, which being shaken off the Lord gives them over to bondage?

*Ans.* There is a double government of the Lord over his people.

1. Internall or inward, of which our Saviour speaks, *Luk. 17. 21. The kingdom of God (saith Christ) comes not by observation and outward pomp; For behold the kingdom of God is within you:* And this is nothing else in generall, but when the Lord doth by his Spirit in the word of his grace cause the whole soule willingly to submit and subject it self to the whole will of God so farre as it's made known to it; this is the inward kingdom of God & government of Christ in the soule. *Rō. 8. 14. So many as are led by the Spirit are the sons of God. Ps. 110. 2. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion, &c. 2 Cor. 10. 4. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnall, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. Vers. 5. Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.* These are mighty boisterous distempers, but the Lord when he comes in his Kingdome, to sit upon the royal throne of the hearts of his people, now they flie: and this is the inward Kingdom

*Quest. 1.*

*Ans.*

of Christ, like a poore Subject pardoned and received to favour, he is before the face of the Prince continually attending on him. *Revel. 7. 14, 15. These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Veri. 15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his Temple, &c.* Now this is meant in part by Gods service in these daies; do you think the Lord cared for thousands of Rams? no, but to walke humbly, *Mica. 6.* Did he care for Temple and Ordinances? no, but *I/sa. 1. 19. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. Neh. 9. 20. In those dayes he gave them his good Spirit to instruct them.*

2. Externall or outward, the end and institution of which was to set up and help forward the inward; for externall Ordinances are nothing in themselves, meane things, but as they are appointed and sanctified for this end, they are most glorious: and therefore Christ threatens the Jewes, *Matth. 21. 43. That the kingdome should be taken from them*; what was that? Surely not inward, for that they had not, but the outward and externall means called Gods kingdome; all these helps and meanes shall be taken from you, and all laid ruinous. Now this externall kingdom of Christ is double.

1. The

1. The externall kingdome or government of God by his Church, in the administration and execution, and subjection to the blessed Ordinances of God, wherein the power and Kingdome of Christ is seen, and thus, *Dan. 2. 44, 45. Dan. 7. 27. It shall be given to the Saints of the most high, &c.* Not to prophane herds of beasts, or cages of unclean birds, but to the Saints of the most high, *Whose kingdome is an everlasting kingdome*, and all the Princes of the world shall subject themselves to this kingdom of Christ.

This outward Kingdome Christ administred amongst his people in this world: And this was part of the Lords government over his people herein, though various from our forme now.

2. Of the Common-wealth, which may have divers forms, and had in the time of *Israel*; but it receiving its law from God, and governing for God, hence it was the government of God, and subjection hereunto was subjection and service to God himselfe: And hence when the people cast off *Samuel*, *1 Sam. 8. 7. They have not rejected thee but me.* *Rev. 11. 15. The kingdomes of the world are become the kingdomes of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.* For although the Common-wealth of *Israel* was made up of the Church, and hence *Iosephus* calls it a Theocracy,

cracy, where the Lord governed; and yet the same thing had divers ~~governments~~, formes and respects; and hence there was a diverse government then; and hence made diverse, 2 Chron. 19. 5, 8. *Jehosaphat sets Judges in the land throughout all the fenced Cities.* Such is the wildnesse, boldnesse, and carelesnes of mens hearts, that they do not only need lawes, but watchmen over them to see they be kept: and hence the Lord appointed some chiefe, some Judges in every City, and also some in every Village; as by proportion may be gathered, *Exod. 18.* every ten men had one over them.

Now this was the blessed wisdom of God to put all into sweet subordination one unto another for himself.

1. Every one professing his name is made for God, for Christ, as Lord of Lords, unto whom every knee must bow; and inwardly subject.

2. Hence the Lord (it being not good to leave man to himselfe) erects a Kingdom of the Church with his owne power, and authority, and government in it for that end.

3. This being poor and shiftlesse against inward and outward revenge, hence the Lord sets up Kingdoms of the world, which either rule for this end or these ends or not, if they do not, they are to answer it, and shall one day to Christ, whom God hath made

made head over all things to the Church, Eph. 1. 22. If they do, then their government, judgement and Kingdome is the Lords in a speciall manner: and hence break the yoke off subjection to any one of these, you cast off Christ, the Lords government and service; and being so linked together, in truth if you break one you break all, and this will provoke the Lord to make you kisse the clinke, and to put your necks under iron bondage that refuse subjection to him.

*Quest. 2.* What is that bondage or other government to which the Lord gives over his people when they have cast off his government; this will provoke the Lord if the Lord be cast off, and the casting off the government of Christ will bring the most famous Kingdomes, Churches and Families into bondage; you will say what is this bondage when is it that the Lord takes his season for the execution of it?

*Ans. 1.* The Lord takes his own times to do it, these were a 120 month before the Lord sent Shishak. Here he was more quick. Nebuchadnezzar comes at last, and many yeares 'tis before the Lord doth it.

*2.* The Lord is various in working, as he is wonderfull and hath divers wayes or meanes of bondage, he hath more prisons and chaines then ones.

First, sometimes the Lord opens the door of a Kingdome or State, for the in-  
rode

*Quest. 2.*

*Ans. 1.*

*Ans. 2.*



cracy, where the Lord governed; and yet the same thing had divers ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~formes~~ <sup>formes</sup> and respects; and hence there was a diverse government then, and hence made diverse, *2 Chron. 19. 5, 8. Josaphat sets Judges in the land throughout all the fenced Cities.* Such is the wildnesse, boldnesse, and carelesnesse of mens hearts, that they do not only need lawes, but watchmen over them to see they be kept: and hence the Lord appointed some chiefe, some Judges in every City, and also some in every Village; as by proportion may be gathered, *Exod. 18. every ten men had one over them.*

Now this was the blessed wisdom of God to put all into sweet subordination one unto another for himselfe.

1. Every one professing his name is made for God, for Christ, as Lord of Lords, unto whom every knee must bow; and inwardly subject.

2. Hence the Lord (it being not good to leave man to himselfe) erects a Kingdom of the Church with his owne power, and authority; and government in it for that end.

3. This being poor and shiftelesse against inward and outward revenge; hence the Lord sets up Kingdoms of the world, which either rule for this end or these ends or not, if they do not, they are to answer it; and shall one day to Christ, whom God hath made

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First, sometimes the Lord opens the door of a Kingdome or State, for the in-

rode

rode of some forraign, or it may be barbarous Enemy breaking in sometime by power, coming in sometime by craft, and then ruling like Lions, which the Lord makes to vex and prick the people of God; thus here their lives were spared, but liberties lost. Thus Judg. 2. 13, 14. *They forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.* And in vers. 14. *The anger of the Lord waxed hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of Sfoylers that spoyled them.* Ver. 15. *Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evill.* And this the Lord doth many times suddenly, that one would never thinke that ever the Lord should be so sudden; the Lord can be as quick to punish, as man to sinne; and that unexpectedly. Eccl. 9. 12. *Man knows not his time, but are taken like fish in an evill net suddenly.* Lam. 4. 12. *The kingdomes of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world would not have believed.* Judg. 5. 8. *They set up new gods, and war was in the gate.*

2. Sometimes the Lord turns the edge of that lawful authority God hath set over them against themselves, to be a heavy scourge from God upon them. Thus it was with Israel in Egypt, Exod. 1. 8, 9. there arose a King which knew not Joseph, and it's said then they were oppressed. Thus Jeroboam whom the ten Tribes chose, Hos. 5. 11. *he oppressed the people, he will be innovating.*

novating, and this becomes their oppression. Thus the people under the reign of degenerate *Solomon* (though their complaint might be in part unjust.) Such is the venome of sin and unsubduednesse to the Kingdom God, that the Lord turns light into darknesse, and makes an aking head matter of sorrow to all the state and body of people. *Eccles. 10. 16. Wo to thee, O Land, when thy King is a childe.* And one man shall do a world of hurt, one *Shebna* or *Amaziab*, and this the Lord doth in justice many times for casting off his government.

3. Sometimes the Lord gives a people up into the hands of one another to be mutual oppressors of each other, that a mans neighbour shall be his oppressor. *Zach. 11. 9. I will pittie no more the inhabitants of the land, I will deliver them every one into his neighbours hands. I will feed you no more, that which dieth let it dye, and that which is cut off let it be cut off, and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another.* Sometimes the Lord is pleased to send marvellous straits into a place, that men are forced to imbondage themselves sometimes by words as bitter as death, as sharp as arrows; the Lord is pleased for the forsaking of his righteous wayes, to make a mans self rip his own bowels, the father against the childe; the master shall be a scourge to the servant, and the servant shall be a scourge to his master, weary him of his life,

life, the government of the Lord in a mans heart or family being cast off. *Mic. 7. 4, 5. Trust not in a friend.* No greater bondage in the world then for men professing the Lord, to be desperately set one against another.

4. By taking from a people all that righteous power of government the Lord hath set over them, when a people despising the Lord and inward government first (for there all begins) and so not prizing what they have, nor praying for them, nor subjecting to them, the Lord hereupon sends some sicknesse, or some other evill, that they are either suddenly taken away, or gradually, and when they are gone, all sink, or else such crosse carriages, that as *Moses* said, so say they, *I cannot beare this people.* Thus *Judges 21. 25. Men did what was right in their owne eyes when there was no King in Israel.* No State so miserable as an Anarchie, when every one is a slave, because every one will be a master. Thus, *Isa. 3. 1, 2. 6. Be a ruler to us.* No, I'll not undertake to rule. So, *2 Chron. 15. 3, 5. when without a teaching Priest, then no peace at all,* men will not be under government of them, you shall not have them, they shall rest in peace, and you shall then know the want of them.

5. By giving them over to Satans, and their own hearts lusts, that seeing they will not serve the Lord, they shall serve their  
lusts



lusts & their sins, that now the Lord he hath  
 test off chastising of men, and conscience  
 shall check no more, prosper, saith the Lord,  
 and go on in thy sin. *Psal. 81. 12. So I*  
*gave them up to their own hearts lusts,*  
*and they walked after their own counsels.*  
*Rev. 22. 11. Let him that is filthy be filthy still.*

When the Lord shall give a man over to  
 Satan, not only to winnow him, to let out  
 the chaffe, and so to make the grain the pur-  
 er, or to buffet them as he did *Paul*, but  
 to insnare them, and hold them, that he  
 shall not only tempt, but his temptations  
 shall take, and not onely take, but hold.  
*2 Tim. 2. ult. Who are taken captive by him*  
*at his will; taken alive as a snare doth,* that  
 now a man is beyond the reach of all  
 means, only peradventure God may give re-  
 pentance. *Isa. 1. 5. Why should ye be stricken*  
*any more? ye will revolt yet more and more.*  
 The Lord leaves smiting, and sayes, Go on  
 and prosper in thy sinne: and which is the  
 worst of all, Satan shall so blinde him and  
 harden him, fill him with pride, passion,  
 lying, hatred of Gods people, cavilling a-  
 gainst the Lords wayes of grace, slighting  
 of his betters, despising of wholesome coun-  
 sell from his dearest friends, that he ~~knows~~  
 not that gray hairs are upon him. And after  
 this when God hath cast out, it may be the  
 Church doth also, a most fearfull bondage  
 that the Lord gives such a soule over unto.

There

Reas. 1.

There are two reasons of this point, which I collect only from the story in this Chapter.

*Reason 1.* Inregard of the righteous Judgement of God. It's just and equall that he that will not be ruled by this blessed Lord Jesus, he should be ruled by his lusts; he that will not be in subjection to a merciful Christ, he should be in bondage to unmerciful men: this an humbled heart will acknowledge, as they do here, *Vers. 6.* They acknowledge the Lord to be righteous: Man being fallen it had been righteous with God to have left all men as the Angels that fell in chains of darknesse for ever. But among his church and people the Lord sends the Gospel to proclaim liberty, and with it sends Christ with his Spirit, to come to the prison-doors of poor sinners, to give repentance as well as remission of sinnes; and now if they will not come out of the bondage, accept of the Lords liberty, 'tis exceeding righteous to deal with them as we do with prisoners condemned to die; if the Prince comes to the prison-doors and saies, I am come to give thee thy life, nay and here is pardon, nay favour, and I will pull off thy chaines also, now if he saies no, I had rather be in prison; every one will say it is just; and as it was in the yeare of Jubile he that would not go free was to be a bondman for ever. 'Tis very righteous

to give men their own choice, 'tis no wrong to let them have their own will: If indeed the lawes of Christ were *Draco's* lawes, hard and heavy, there were something to object, but they are most sweet, and for which of all other blessings men have cause to blesse him, *Psal. 147. ult.*

*Reason 2.* In regard of the mercy or merciful wisdom of the Lord towards his Church and people, especially his peculiar ones, that hereby they keep the closer to the Lord, set a higher price upon the rules and government of the Lord, love his kingdome the more, and the liberties thereof, and use them better when they have them again, so here, *that they may know my service, &c.*

*I.* How sweet it is. Experience we say is the Mistris of fooles; such is the foolishness of mens hearts that men are many times never truly taught a truth till they are taught it by sense. *Prov. 5. 11. and thou mourn at last when thy flesh is consumed;* tell a man of all the glory of the Saints, they never understand it till they feel it, tell men of the wo of their wayes, they will not beleeve it till they see it. *Psal. 32. 9. Be not as the horse or mule that hath no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle. Hosea 10. 11. Ephraim is like an Heifer that is taught. Like untamed Horses that will cast their rider, un-*

lesse they be held under and backt, and then they are gentle, so 'tis here; and truly 'tis long before a man can learn the sweet of Christs government: hence *Israel* must be long in *Egyptian* bondage, and many long miseries, so that if there be either justice or mercy in the Lord he will do this, and this point shall be true.

Use 1.

Use 1. Hence then see that the greatest liberty and sweetest liberty is to be under the government of Christ Jesus, although men do not think so: hence the Lord tells them here *they shall know my service*, they might have replied we do know it. No, till they be in bonds they know it not, nor cannot learn it. So 'tis now; and hence let men observe whiles they live loosely, and are guided by their own wisdom, for their own ends, according to their own will, at peradventures, at rovers, as they please, they do think this liberty very sweet; and 'tis better then to be curb'd in: But let the Lord strike an arrow in the heart of these wilde bucks, that have broke parke and pale, send affliction, and an Iron yoke of sorrow upon them or distresse of conscience, if there be any sense and feeling left, they will bemoan themselves, and say, I did think my liberty sweet, but now I see 'tis bitter in a sinful way: and the Lords way was most sweet, by their own confession. Hence *Psal. 2. 3. Let us break their bands,*

&c.

¶ *Use 1.* But Oh now hence learn this truth, and digest it thoroughly, that the greatest liberty lies here: do not in thy judgement think Christian liberty lies, in being freed from the law as a rule of obedience in respect of the matter of it to be done; nor in thy practise; but know, though thou didst meet with a thousand Sorrows with it and griefs, yet 'tis sweet. Christs yoke, (*Mat. 11. 30*) is easie, and his burthen light. What? When not a hole to hide his head in, when a reproach of men, a worme & no man; when he boare the Fathers wrath? Yes, when he was meek under it, (*not mine but thy will be done*) it was then most sweet. *1 Kings 9. 21, 22.* To be a servant to Solomon is no bondage, *Psalms 119. 32.* I will runne, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

¶ *Use 2.* Hence see the reason why the Lord hath deprived his Churches of their liberty, and his government over them at sundry times, and hath put them under Iron yokes, and bonds, and sore pressures; the reason is shewn, they have either openly or more secretly cast off the government of the Lord, here hath been the very wound the aile of all Churches famous and glorious. *Psal. 81. 14.* *Oh that they had hearkened, I should then soon have subdued their enemies.* The cause is not so hard to finde to a discerning spirit who is privy in any mea-



sure to the counsels of God. 1 King. 9. 8, 9. Solomon hath a promise that the Lords eyes and heart shall be to his people which are under him: but if once they slip the Coller, then wo; and why? Because they forsook the Lord that brought them out of Egypt, they had liberty, but they cast it off.

What do you think was the moving cause of all those bloody persecutions, when the blood of dogs was more precious then of Christian Churches? were not they godly? yes, I do not doubt of it: but as it was here, though humbled they must be in bondage, because they had cast off the government of the Lord Jesus. And hence in the Apostles time evil times were come, sad apostasies from the truth, and because it was long before they were low enough. And hence, Revel. 6. till the fifth seal was opened; no crying, as it was with Israel in bondage, no prayer to purpose; and because the Lord saw they would abuse all liberties if they had them. And hence in Constantines time, when peace came in, contention came with it, and so abused all, that their peace was their poyson. And hence in the primitive Churches, they began to cast off the government of the Lord Jesus, murmurings there were, hence came persecution; but they were a precious people, and made blessed use of it. And the Lord couples their chief persecution with their rest.

And

And 'tis said, *Act 9. 31. Then had the Churches rest, &c.*

And what do you think of the reason of the long reign of Antichrist, exalting himself above God, and all that's called God, bringing the Church under the heaviest bondage for body and soul that ever the earth saw? Men did not love the truth, either speculative to guide their minds, or practical to rule their wils; and hence left to this day.

What is the cause of Bleeding *Germanies* now? Oh *poor Germany!* Whence the Gospel first brake out in its full strength, that now 'tis a field of blood, that men in woods like satyres are afraid of men; and men in cities glad to eat the entrails of Beasts, and sometimes the flesh of their own babies to preserve their lives. What was there no evil, but the common condition of the Church to be under the cross? ask them, they cannot tell what ailes them, but curse the *Emperour* and *Swedes*, &c. Oh think of it with sorrow in secret for them that know it not themselves, they have secretly, I say, secretly cast off the government of a merciful Christ, and hence are under the hand of unmerciful men.

What is the cause in our native countrey, notwithstanding all prayers and tears no deliverance? Truly men do not know it but the Lord sees it, they know not how to use their liberty.

And for our selves, what shall I say, I cannot but blesse God and wonder to see how 'tis with many, and rejoyce to see many precious holy ones, to whom *one day in Gods court is sweeter then a thousand elsewhere*: but I must professe and cannot but mourne for others, men that were eminent under bondage, but never worse then here, as if the Lord should say, Look here be your eminent ones; look, and feare, and mourn you ministers of my house; here be the people you had thought had been converted, and that of all others such a one would never a fallen to; one an opinion takes him, another a lot, another loose company, another his lust, another growes proud, another fierie, another murmuring: what should I name al? Oh that my words might be healing, &c.

Use 3.

Use 3. Hence see what will become of us that are now under the government of the Lord, if ever we cast it off, either inward, or outward, or both. We are no dearer to him then his people *Israel* here, nay *Judah*. When old *Israel* the great and numerous tribes of *Israel* had set up calves, *Israel* *Judah* and *Benjamin* received the Priests, and yet they fell and were in bondage. I know we are not yet in bondage; yet it is not more unreasonable to speake now then for the Lord to *Solomon*, 1 *King* 9. 1.

Quest.

Quest. But there being much unsubduednes in

in the hearts of the best, how shall one know when there be such sinnes for which the Lord will cast from under his government?

*Answer 1.* When men do not loath their own hearts for their unprofitablenesse, but loath Gods ordinances secretly, and grow weary of them as of their burdens, because of the unprofitablenesse of them. When a people finde not that special good by them which recompenceth all losses, and so prize them, but lay blame on them because unfruitful to them, *Malachie 3. 13.* He speaks to a people got out of Captivity, *Four words have been stout against me, no say they, 'Tis in vaine to serve the Lord, what profit is there in this?* you must conceive they had many losses, were very poor, as *vers. 11.* a temptation which a proud heart cannot indure above any, here is now no profit in mourning, fasting, &c. and Gods own people began to think so: and hence, *Verse 16.* *Then they spake often one to another,* there was good effect of his Sermon: now what follows? *Chapter 4. 1.* Hence the wicked shall come and cut off Branch and Root in *Antiochus* time, there is a burning day a coming, that shall burn down house, root and branch: and hence, *Matthew 21. 43.* *The kingdome shall be given to them that bring forth fruit.* You will say, we do; No thy own mouth shall condemne thee, you

*Answer 1.*

do not, you finde no good by all the ordinances of God, and hence come those Questions: what warrant for such an ordinance? the bottome is, they never felt good of it, and hence grow weary of it: well if it be your burthen, the Lord will ease you of it.

2

2. When you see men (professing the feare of God) mutually naturally contentions, and continuing so: I say, contentious with Saints which they say they love, and which by covenant bound to love, either from some conceived wrong, and hence cannot forgive as Christ doth them; or from apredjudicate groundlesse opinion, they care not for me, nor I for them; or from a spirit of scornful Censoriousnesse, what are such and such; or because distasted, because of some repropse in their sinne, or by some opinion, or by some worldly conveniency, or laying out lots, or restraint of some liberty, &c. or because of some sin: Now can fit and censure; and I say, when this is mutual; for a godly man may be contended with, but he prays & mournes and pitties, unlesse it be at some time; but when it shall continually abide so fierce and implacable, *Eccles. 7. 9. Anger resteth in the bosome of fools*; when a man shall be glad of an occasion of difference, that so he may depart and have something to quiet conscience for breach of Covenant, that there can be no healing, but Belies of pigs are more deare then bowels of



of Saints, and when quiet, upon the least occasion apt to pick holes and quarrel. Now it's time for the Lord to give over to another government. *Zach. 11. 14. 15. When Brother-hood is broken, then an Idol-shepherd is set up. Exodus 2. Moses was sent to deliver Israel, but he findes two Hebrews oppressed striving, and must not be checkt neither, well then fare-well deliverance if you be of that spirit; you shall love one another better if ever the Lord doth that for you. It hath been the wildome of some Princes, when their subjects have been at Civil warres, to call them forth to a common enemy, and there they can agree. Oh brethren, there is no sinne like this, and yet none so slighted. You shall know what it is either by being yoked under enemies or sinnes. The first of these breaking bonds of union to Christ the other with his members.*

*Use 4.* Hence see the reason why many men are delivered up to the bondage of their own lusts; the most sad bondage and power of Satan, who have seemed to be delivered from it; truly they have cast off the government of the Lord. Men wonder why in this countrey men are more vile then ever they were, men that gave great hopes; the reason is this, they have seemed to be under Christs government, but secretly cast it off. And hence filthy and vile lusts are their Apparitors and Purlevants, &c.

*Object.*

Object.

*Objection.* The Saints feel a bondage, how shall one know the difference?

Answ. 1.

*Answer.* The first and greatest inthralment is, when Satan and sinne so rule as that they know them not, this is lamentable, that like those, *John 8. 33.* when Christ told them, if they continued in the truth it should make them free, they would not believe that ever they were in bondage: so here a man thinks himself free when he is a slave, thus *Psalm 81. 13.* God gave them up to their own hearts lusts, and they were led by their own Counsels. The Saints may be much carried away by the power of Satans temptations, but never so far as to think their bondage is their freedom, and to have reasons and arguments prevailing against the good wayes of Gods grace, and to have reasons to maintaine their sinfull courses, and that is in such as have wit, and parts, and knowledge, which through the righteous judgement of God are left so farre to abuse it, as to make use of it to maintain their sin-ful lusts.

Answ. 2.

2. When men if they see their bondage yet have no heart to come out of it, in using all means for that end. When the will is in captivity, no captivity like it, no gally-slave like it: A childe of God hath a bondage and is led into captivity, but *Oh miserable man* he cries; but these, *Prov. 17. 16.* have a price in their hand, but no heart to make use of it. *Ezra. 1. 5.* So many whose hearts the

Lord

Lord stirred, they gat up to go to Jerusalem: But the Lord never stirs the hearts of these poore creatures: they know and feare, yet have no heart to get out of that condition, nay rather willingly are so. They sell themselves to their lusts, and sins, and Satan: here is (saith Satan) this gaine, neglect prayer for it, tell a lie for it, breake Covenant for it, lose thy peace for it: here is this honour and credit, look big on it: here is this estate, carry thy countenance high, and thus apparel thy selfe with these trappings, walke thus with thy bootes French-like: here is this pleasure and mirth, keep thou this company, loose thy heart, neglect thy God, give thy selfe over to it: here is this ease, deferre thy repentance, be cold in prayer, neglect thy family; and a man sells himselfe to his lust, pleasures and honours; thou art thus provokt, and therefore now thou must fret, and murmur, and rage, and hold thy own, and so ease thy heart, thus men set themselves to sale willingly.

3. When men have some heart to come out of it, but the Lord leaves men to an indifferency, and consequently to apostasie, as it was with *Agrippa* almost perswaded, and like the *Isachites* that refused to go into that good land, *Numbers 14*. And hereupon the Lord was wroth, and said they should not, but they repented and would faine have had some pittie shewed in regard of their misery,

*Ans. 3.*

misery, but their enemies fell upon them and destroyed them: al the plea of the *Arminians* is for this, which is nothing else but mens misery. *Luke 14.* those that were invited made their excuses and said, *I must needs go and see it:* But found no necessity to come to Christ. Now the Saints the Lord never leaves them to a spirit of indifferency, but keepes them in a spirit of necessity. I must come out of this miserable condition, saith the poore soul, they say not flesh is weak, but I must have helpe. *Psalme 110.* because 'tis the day of the Lords power, they will not rest contented without helpe; and if the Lord delayes them and hears not, they will follow the Lord so much the harder.

4. If they have any resolution to come out, and think it must not be thus, and purpose never to live thus again: yet notwithstanding all their purposes and resolutions they fall again, and never get any real conquest, their untamed hearts & wills are never a whit more subdued. *Isaiah 63, 9, 8.* For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie. So he was their Saviour, but they soone rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: their wills were never subdued. But now the Saints either the Lord preserves them from such falls and apostasies: Or if they do depart from the Lord by reason of the prevailing power of any temptation, they ever get real conquest by their fall, their

sinful

sinful corruption thereby gets its deadly wound. *Rom. 11. 10. Their backs are not alwayes bowed down*, but the Lord raiseth their bowed down spirits, *Psalme 145. 14. and upholdeth their spirits for them when they think they shall one day fall by the hand of such Saul-like sins and distempers.* A carnal heart may carry a faire profession, and be in subjection to Christ for a time, but his back stands alwayes bowed down under his profession, it is his burthen, and hence at last he casts it off as a man doth his wearisome burden: but on the contrary, a childe of God being indeed weary of his sinne, and carrying that up and down with him as his burden, with his soul bowed down in the sense of his own vilenesse, by this means through the helpe of Christ, at last he comes to get real conquest over his sinne, and cast it off.

5. When the Lord in this case lets them alone without inward or outward troubles, this is a fearful signe. *Hosea 4. 17. Ephraim is joyned to his Idols, let him alone*, the Lord will take no more paines with them, he is wearied out with striving. *Isaiah 1. 5. Why should ye be stricken, ye will revolt yet more and more*; when the Lord sees men the worse for his merciful corrections, he deales like parents that have have striven long with their children, and can do no good on them, they then resolve to let them



them take their own course, and will own them no longer to be of their family: the Lord never deales thus long with his; but if their sinne will not waste by words, the Lord will then try what chaines will do, and now they shall finde good, now they shall remember their backslidings and apostasies from God, and their impenitency in sinne, in secret sinnes, especially in the dayes of their peace and prosperity; now the Lord will make sinne as bitter as ever it was sweet. Oh consider this you that are prosperous, and because the Lord is good to you, therefore you think the Lord likes well of your wayes. No greater plague then for the Lord to give a man peace in his sinne, or if the Lord begins to afflict thee in thy name, or estate begin to be blasted, and thou canst see Gods hand on thee, and knowest it, and yet thou remainest unhumbled, this is a signe thou art under the bondage of thy sinne.

Use 5.

Use 5. For examination, whether we do, or when a people do cast off the government of the Lord and destroy his kingdom? it's needful to know the sinne that we may prevent the misery; and 'tis certaine, let *New-England* be watchful, and make sure here, to advance the *Prince of peace*, and to keep the right and government in his hand, and you shall have the blessing of God and his ordinances, peace and mercy

in your times, and continued to your children; for his kingdome is an everlasting kingdome, and of the increase of his kingdome there is no end: and on the contrary, if New-England cast off the government from over them, and refuse his service, the Lord will then take the kingdome from you, and you shall then know the want of what now ye enjoy. Now because Christs government or kingdome is

1. Inward.

2. Outward { in Church,  
in State.

I shall let you know 1. when the inward kingdome of Christ is set up, and when 'tis razed down, which I shall do by giving you a brieve view of the nature of it, and wherein it consists, and so you may the better Judge of your own hearts in this particular. As Satan hath an inward kingdome in the hearts of those that are without, so the Lord Jesus hath an inward kingdome in the hearts of all his Saints, Col. I. 13. *Blessed be God (saith the apostle) which hath translated us from darknesse to light, and from the power of Satan into the kingdome of his dear sonne,* which is very spiritual, little seen, a man may be under all outward government, and yet naught here; and therefore attend; this inward kingdome therefore consists in four things, or when the whole soul submits itself to God in these four particulars.

I.

1. When the whole soul gives entertain-  
ment

ment unto the Lord himself to come into it for if a people shall say they are under such a government; and yet will not admit the Prince himself to come amongst them but keep him out of the kingdome, the

2. cast off his government and his kingdome

2. When the whole soul closeth with the whole will of the Lord; for if a people shall receive a Prince amongst them, but he shall make no wholesome Laws to govern them, but will be led by their own will and lusts, they pull down his kingdome.

3.

3. When the whole soul thus closeth with the will of Christ by vertue of the power and Spirit of Christ: for if a people submit to the will of their Prince, but 'tis not by vertue of his authority over them, command of them, and helps he hath given them for that end, but it is by reason of some foreign power, that underhand encourageth them to yield, this is poore subjection.

4. When the soul thus submits to Christ will for the Lords ends, denying its own wisdom or will, and is led by the Lord to his end: for if a people shall submit to their Prince, but 'tis to set up other princes, he is cast off from his throne. When man shall serve God; and be under his government because it is profitable or honourable, it suits his own end, this is poore service in the Lords account.

1. I. I say then, the soul is under the inward kingdome

kingdome or government of Christ, when the whole soul gives entertainment to the Lord of Lords, the Lord himself with all his train, in and by the Gospel of grace, the royal sword and Scepter of Christs kingdome; for when Christ himself is thus received, the kingdome of God is come to that soul, and entred into that heart; and hence *Marke 1, 14, 15.* the Gospel is called *the Gospel of the Kingdome*; and when *John* and Christ preached *believe and repent, for the kingdome of God is at hand.* Under which word is comprehended much, but principally Christ Jesus ready to enter the souls of his people; and hence *John* preached Christ. Now 'tis said, those that were effectually wrought upon, *Matt 11. 12.* that *the kingdome of heaven did suffer violence, and the violent take it by force*; so that the kingdome of God is come into the hearts of all the elect of God, when the soul uses holy violence, and the Lord does draw the heart to an entertainment of the Lord himself; Many difficulties there be between them and Christ, and yet they break through all.

This is the condition of all men by nature, they are strangers to Christ, and live without God and Christ in the world, and Christ from them, and so Satan takes possession, and rules them, and so men are under the kingdome of darknesse, so that

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the diuel himself possesseth every natural man, as the Apostle speaks, *he worketh in the children of disobedience*, and runne on so, and remain so. Now the Gospel of the kingdome, and the means to advance Christ in his kingdome, makes a free offer of Christ himself; indeed it offers pardon, grace, mercy, life, glory, but all these are in Christ himself, and we possesse them by possessing and receiving of Christ himself; as a poor woman hath all the wealth of the man by entertaining of the man. So that the Gospel firstly and primarily offers Christ himself, and faith doth pitch on Christ himself and doth open *those everlasting doores*, that the King of glory may come in. Iohn 1. 12. 'tis said, *So many as received him, he gave power to be the sonnes of God.* 1 Iohn 3. 12. *He that hath the son, hath life*; so that now let a man refuse or reject the Lord himself as he is thus offered in the Gospel, he does refuse the kingdome of the Lord and does refuse to be under the power of the Lord. True it may be said the kingdom of God hath been nigh to him, when Christ is offered in the Gospel, and God sayes as it were nothing shall please me so much as this, if thou dost receive me. Luke 10. *Go and preach to these and these Cities and if they will not receive you, shake off the dust of your feet, and let them know the kingdome of God hath been nigh*



to them; then Christ comes into the soul when the whole soul takes the Lord for himself, Christ and all that Christ hath, Christ in a pardon, and Christ in a promise: at that very day the Lord gave the heart to receive him, then is the kingdome of God come in that heart, and with him all, life, peace, joy, and glory, God, Spirit, and all.

Now the whole soul receives him, when  
1. The minde sees him in the glory of his grace, that though it had low, mean thoughts of Christ before, for which it mournes, yet the rising of this glorious Sun upon him, he esteemes all things losse for him that he may win Christ, and be found in Christ, I in him, and He in me, in Vocation: and not having my own righteousness, in Justification: And to feel the life of Christ and death also in sanctification, and to attain to the resurrection of the dead in glorification: and now nothing is dear to the soul but Christ. — 2. When the will, after the soul hath had some hopes the Lord may look towards it in his grace; and having had many heart-breaking teares before the Lord, the Lord is now pleased by the glad tidings of the Gospel to give the will power not only to receive and entertaine the Lord, but gladly to receive him. The soul wonders that ever the Lord should bow down to him, and offer mercy to him; and when as together with this, by the sweet

favour of his Grace that he doth let into the heart, the soul doth receive the Lord with most dear imbracings into his soul, that now there is none like to the Lord. *Cant. 1. 3. Thy name is like an ointment poured out, where the very feet of the messengers of glad tidings are beautiful:* But the Lord himself is the only crown and Joy of the soul, when the least look of love to a cast-away is more sweet then kingdoms, ay and much more, that's love itself. *Isaiah 52. 9. Break forth into joy, sing together ye wast places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his People.* When kings shall stop their mouths as vile in themselves, and not able to set forth that glory they never heard of before, and the soul for Joy sells away all to buy this pearl, that it sayes with *David, How do I love thy Law!* Now beloved when the soul does thus receive the Lord, the kingdome of God is come to that soul; and therefore try and examine, is it thus with you? or hath the Lord begun to deal thus with thee, to give himself, the glory of Angels, the wonderment of heaven, the mighty God of heaven to come to thy heart? thou art then under the government of the kingdome of God. But now on the contrary if thou canst be content to receive the ordinances of Christ, or the consolations of Christ, or some of the commands of Christ, and that is all, and the Lord never

gave

gave thee a heart to close with Christ himself, it's a strange thing to thee, that which is the main thing, the Diamond in the Ring of the Gospel; thou art yet farre enough off from the kingdome of God; I dare not say, nor think for all the world, that ever the kindome of God came to thy heart. Again, if you have received Christ, but not with thy whole soul: that now the offer, promises, blood, life, grace, glory in the Gospel, are grown common things to thee; that the Lord never sent thee home wondering at the glory of Gods grace, to a poor wretch, never yet said'st, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*: the Lord never yet lay next thy heart, or if thou hast had some liking, and some love and affections in pangs; yet the Lord is not only precious, and exceeding dear in thy heart, thy heart breaks not for grief that thou hast so much slighted him, so little born him on thy heart; It is a signe that the Lord hath begun to reveal himself to thy soul, when he gives thee a heart to mourne for thy standing out against him, but this never came to thy soul.

Certainly, here is the wound of many men: The Gospel of God never hath its proper effect, till the Lord help thee to give thy whole heart thus to a Saviour, to a God, to the Prince of peace; and till this is done, the Gospel is ineffectual; it doth nothing.

It was a sweet prayer of him, Make thy Sonne dear, very dear, exceeding dear, only dear and precious, or not at all; If thou hadst a thousand hearts, it was too little for Christ to love him, and do'st grudge him one? when thou hast imparted thy heart, and esteem to thy lusts and creature; do'st thou love the Lord with part of thy heart? but a vile lust, a poof creature must have a share, and the remnant will serve Christ; is he not the only pearl of thy heart, to give him daily communion, no this thou art a stranger to. *Hear ye despisers, and wonder, and perish. God will work a worke in your dayes.* What is that? the infinit God cannot expresse as it were, the wrath that shall come against such a soul; nor I cannot expresse the wrath that shall come upon such a despiser of the Lord Jesus. Give him all thy heart or none; if thou hast the Lord, thou hast his whole heart; if he had had a thousand lives, he would have laid them all down for thee: He poured out his blood for every one of his, but for the present thou art out of the Kingdom of God to this day.

2.

2. When the whole soul closeth with the whole will of Christ, having thus received him; for if a Prince be come, and people will not be ruled by him, nor any lawes that he makes, though never so good, but what they list, the Kingdome is cast off; For, beloved, there

there is a marvellous common deceit in mens hearts, they would not for all the world but have Christ; ay, but the will of Christ is neglected, that is a clog, and the burden of the Lord of hosts; Christ is sweet, and his will is bitter; Christ is precious, and his will is vile. Why do you make him a King, and ye will make lawes for Christ, and you will rule Christ, and his will shall not stand? here is no King; Such kinde of idle Libertines were in the Apostles time, 1 Joh. 1. 6. *If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and there is no truth in us;* But now when the whole soul does submit to the whole will of the Lord, now his Kingdome is come indeed, when his will is thus sweet. Dan. 7. 27. *His Kingdome is an everlasting Kingdome, and all nations shall serve him; and his servants ye are whom ye obey,* whether Christ, the devil, or your own hearts.

Now the whole will of Christ is

1. Directing.

2. Correcting.

Now when the soul submits to both, then Christ rules in his Kingdome; Sometime you meet with Christs directing will; now this is mens frame, naturally they will not see it, *they will not come to the light*, John 3. 20. they are led by their own counsel, and will not regard the light and counsel of God in his word; they will quarrel with the



light when it is crosse to their ends, gaine, honour and the like; men have high thoughts against the Lord Jesus, 2 Cor. 10. 5.  *Casting down imaginations, and every high thought that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God.* And again, if men do see it, yet like the devil that has much light, they do not love it, nor out of love (not unlesse it be out of fear) subject to it, like *Balaam* that had no love to Gods command, but onely was acted by fear and constraint; now when the soul continues thus, it casts off Christs Kingdom; but if the whole soule first comes to the light, though it sees little, sets the whole will of Christ before it, *Psal. 18. 22. saith David; I have kept the wayes of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God,* and though it hath had many quarrellings against the truth of God, yet now it hath not, nor dares not, but sayes, *Lord, teach me;* the Lord gives them hearts to lye down at the feet of any man that shall shew them any thing that is amisse in them, and they say with *David, Lord, search me, and try me:* I have many crooked wayes, and therefore, good Lord, finde them out, and therefore come to the Lord for that end, and though there be something in them that is desperately contrary to the good will of God, yet there is an inward man that does delight in the law of God, and when the Lord is pleased to give them an heart to submit

submit to the will of God; Oh the soul doth wonder at the Lord, that the Lord should shew him any thing, and help him against temptations; and though there be a great deal of wearinesse in the wayes of God, yet there is a spirit within him, that it is indeed heaven it self to him to be in the ordinances of God; now ye stoop to the directing will of Christ, when this is thy way, though thou goest out of it, yet comest in it again, as sin is a wicked mans way, although he goeth a thousand times out of it.

Now, for the other, the correcting will of Christ; The Lord hath strong tryals: Now here subjection to Christ is required as well as to the directing will of Christ; then the soul submits to this will when the minde objects not, charges not God with folly, as *Eli*, 1 Sam. 3. 18. *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*; And likewise the will, though it hath had many sad bouts, yet this is his frame in the conclusion, that the will of Christ is better then every thing else, the will of Christ is alone sweet to him, *Isa*. 38. saith *Hezekiah*, *Good is the will of the Lord*, and so *Lam*. 3. *It's good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth, and to turne his cheeks to him that smites him*; Nay when there is spiritual evils on the soul, as was on Christ himself, spiritual desertions, nothing but bitternesse and sorrow; yet the soul saith, as Christ did, *Not my will, but thine*  
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*be done, Father save me from this house, yet Father glorifie thy self, and so the soul does humbly submit it self to the Lord, though the Lord should never pittie it, yet it will lye down at the feet of the Lord, now is Gods Kingdome come.*

But if the soul will have Christ, and yet cast off the will of Christ. 1. Either in his judgement, that the law of God as given by Christ, should be no rule to a Christian; suppose you were in *England*, and were there prest to bow before an Altar, or Image; what shall lead you, if that Gods will and law must not be your rule? The Lord will one day make you know his blessed will, in that blessed law of his, that ye shall never finde peace to the end of the world, except the Lord do help ye thus to walke. Again, when men cannot endure the will of Christ, cannot endure exhortations, what doth the man mean to exhort us thus? I tell thee, there goeth forth power with the exhortations of Christ. I say, take heed of casting off the will of Christ here; and so when men in their practice shall quarrel against any of Gods truths, and are loath to see it, or if they do, yet not love dearly every truth of God, but it's a burden to them; especially if it crosse their own ends and gaine, they will not see it to be a truth, lest they should be convinced, and turne to the rule of it; if the will and ordinances of

Christ

Christ be a burden to a man, and a man is not wearie of his wearinesse, but wearie of them all the while: Art thou under the government of Christ? If a man forsaken of God, led by his own counsels be under the Kingdom of Christ, then thou art; so long as there is credit for the truth, so long it is entertained; but now suppose it be costly, that it should bring beggery & affliction with it, is it now sweet to you? doth this support thy heart? I am in Gods way, canst lye down and subscribe to the equity of Christs proceedings with thee, though he should never shew favour to thee; if it be not thus, I dare not say thou art under the Kingdome of Christ. And so for the correcting will of Christ, many sad afflictions the Lord tries thee withall, the Lord tries men marvellously; when thou art under the hand of the Lord, those very things that should make men cry to heaven, and wean thee from the world, those very things do harden thee, and make thee grudge and chafe. The Lord be merciful to thee, if this be thy frame, the Kingdome of Christ never came into that heart; you are begging for mercy; and the Lord sayes, you mercy? you have abused it; no saith the Lord, Go to your lust that have despised the day of grace, and so now you cast off the Lord, because the Lord will not give you mercy when you would have it. Will you now quarrel with the Lord? no, down proud heart; pray still,  
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and mourn still, and turne to the Lord; and say, Lord do with me what thou wilt, I am clay in thine hand, thou may'st make me a vessell of dishonour, I deserve not the least bit of bread; such a one as is above the Lord and his will, is not under the Lord, therefore submit thy self to the good will of Christ.

3.

3. When the soul doth thus submit to the will of Christ, by vertue of the power and Spirit of Christ, *i. e.* when the soul doth not submit by vertue of its own power, strength or ability, for this is forreigne power; But as it doth seek to submit to the will of Christ, so it would have Christ himselfe act it and rule it, and so inable it to submit there unto; Now is the Kingdome of God come neere to that heart. And herein Christs Kingdome is different from Princes, they give lawes that men may keep them by their own might; hence they command no impossible things, but the will of Christ is so crosse to a carnal heart, that 'tis impossible man of himself should submit to it. But the Lord doth it for this end, that the soul should then come to Christ in its need, that he would do *all the good pleasure of his will*, and now the Lord himselfe reignes, and that gloriously, *Rom. 8. 1, 2. For the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Iesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death. Acts 5. 31. A Prince and Saviour, for to give repentance*



repentance and remission of sins. It is part of his Princely power for to give remission of sins; both in turning from sin, and to God, and all the wayes of God, and now you exalt him when he is thus set up: 1 Cor. 4. 20. *The Kingdome of God is not in word, but in power.* The power of Christ Jesus is come into thy soul, and the soul is under the Kingdome of the Lord Jesus, when it doth lye under the mighty power of the Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Thess. 1. 11, 12. *We pray alwayes for you, that the Lord would work and fulfil the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith in power, that Christ may be glorified.* Yea, then is Christ glorified when God omnipotent reignes over sin and unbelief; and when the Lord doth this, not only the Kingdome of God is now come, but the Kingdome of Christ in glory is come; there is many a poor soul thinks Christ rules him not, because he cannot do this nor that, because he findes his heart unable, and unwilling for to submit to the will of Christ; I finde no strength at all, saith the soul, and I go to Christ and finde not strength conveyed, and now he thinks he is not under the Kingdome of Christ. I answer, that is not the question; but hath the Lord made thee willing in the day of his power? when the soul doth lye under the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, when the soul doth lye like wax before the Lord Jesus; when the soul saith,

faith, Lord there was never any change of my nature; the good Lord change it, and if there be any change, the good Lord increase and stir up the graces of thy Spirit in my soul, and do thou lead me and guide me. Brethren, the Kingdome of Christ is come to this soul: *John 5. 40. You will not come to me for life; He doth not say, you do not quicken your selves, or ye cannot come to me, but will not; here is their wound, they will not come to Christ for life. Rom. 6. 19. As ye have yeelded your members servants to sin and Satan, so now yeeld up your selves servants to righteousness and to holiness. Psal. 119. 5, 6. Thou hast commanded that we should keep thy precepts continually. Oh that my heart were directed to keep thy precepts continually! Oh that my heart were directed to keep thy statutes!* When a Christian is grappling with his own heart, ye will never be able to overcome the unsubduednesse thereof, but when ye bring them to the Lord Jesus Christ, that he would take a course with them: 1. Now ye please Christ. 2. Ye take a sure course to have the will of God done, he being in office for that end; for *Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and Saviour to Israel*: When the soul doth look up to the Lord Jesus, and lye under the power and Spirit of the Lord Jesus. 3. You now make the yoke of Christ sweet, and his name glorious; nothing glorifies Christ

so much as this, when Jesus doth work in a Christian, now the Kingdome of Christ is come to the soul, and that in power.

But now when men will not submit thus far to Christ: 1. They can do nothing, but will not come to him, on whom God hath laid salvation; you say, you cannot understand, nor edifie by the Sermons ye hear, and you cannot part with your lusts. Ay, but now this is thy condemnation, thou wilt not go to a Saviour that he may teach thee and help thee, when men will not have the Lord Jesus to reigne over them: or 2. If men do come, they will not come to him where he may be found; but say, I can do nothing; Christ must do all, and so neglect the means wherein he will be found; or 3. Will submit and come in means to him, but not then at the speciall time when He is to be sought, and may be found, viz. in time of temptation. But then forget and forsake him, and cry not *Hosanna*: Lord, now save, now help me against this lust; When temptation comes, when passion and pride come, do you now go to Jesus Christ? When the world begins to draw thy heart away; dost thou say thus, Lord I have prayed this day against this sin, and Lord I have no strength against it, now Lord help me? but here is the misery of the soul, it doth not go to Christ, and by this means live in complaints all their life-time. 4. If lastly  
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any thing be to be done ; they will do it themselves, as *Paul*, *Gal. 1. 12.* Not but that a Christian should put forth himself, a Christian is not a dead-hearted Christian at all times, but the grace of God which comes from Christ, doth act the soul in a continuall dependance on Christ ; and where Christ acts not, there Satan doth. Now I say the Kingdome of God is come, when the soul doth thus submit to the stream of the blessed Spirit of the Lord, that the Lord may guide it. Oh beloved, here is the skill, that poseth the Angels how to tell you ; so to yield your selves to Christ, as that Christ may come, so to abide in the stock, that all your fruit may be from him: So to lye under the Lord, as that the stream of the Spirit of life may fall on thee ; so to be implanted in the Lord, as to fetch life from him, and bring forth fruit to him. But try this course, submit to the will of the Lord Jesus, be nothing in thy own eyes ; and if the Lord do give thee any thing, blesse the Lord for it, if any strength against thy sin, be vile in thy own eyes, and try and see if ye finde not the Kingdome of God, the glory of Heaven come into thy soul. Oh the light, life, prayers you might have, the heavenly conference ye will have together, that it would do a mans heart good to be with such a Christian ; that those that are with you might say, Verily God is in this man ; verily there is joy in heaven

Heaven when the Saints keep in this frame.

4. When the soul yeelds thus to the will of Christ for Christs ends; for such is the subtil wretchednesse of mens heart, that men would have Christ glorifie himself, that he may glorifie and honour them; like *Simon Magus*, that would give any money for Apostolical gifts, that he might be some body that way also: Now if a man shall submit, go to Christ for gifts and parts; that's to set up another King, to advance a mans self; and so also sin and the devil, and Christ must be made a servant for this end; He is now no King: like a Rebel that is not content, that thousands of the Kings Subjects should serve him, but he will have the Prince serve him also: Every man will say, this doth utterly overthrow the Kingdom of such a Prince. When a man shall secretly fight against the Lord, and be for himself; and for the devil and sin within; When a man shall make all the creatures serve him, the souldiers of his army; meat, drinke, and outward comforts, this is a marvellous thing; Ay, but when a man shall make Jesus Christ, and God himself, and profession of Christ; make these to serve him, to raise up his name; this the Lord takes very ill.

Only this I would adde; when the soul doth look at Christ with a single eye, that Christ is sweet and precious, and lyes under the blessed Spirit of Christ for that end;

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and



and now looks up to Christ, that he may submit to him with a single eye, that the name of Christ may be glorified by life, and death: true it is, self will be in every duty, and so is contrary to the Lord in all, and not for the Lord. Yet though it be thus, there is another thing in the soul that is wholly for God and Christ: and hence seeks that he may do his work; his heart loves him, and so seeks him; and he begs it with many teares. Oh that my children might serve and love this God; nay, that all the world might see, and blesse, and admire this God, and the Lord enlargeth his heart herein, *Psal. 72. 19.* and truly now the Kingdome of God is come to thy soul. *Rom. 5. 17.* *As sin and Satan do reigne by death; So Iesus Christ doth reigne by life to eternal life.* *Matth. 25. 14.* He is the true Subject that improves his Talents for the King: Christ will subdue all his to himself, *Psal. 66. 3.* *Through the greatnesse of thy power, shall thine enemies submit themselves to thee.* *Rom. 14. 17.* *For the Kingdome of God is not in meat and drinke; but in righteousnesse and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost.* When a man shall be picking fault with things, and this and that offends him; get ye gone, the Kingdome of God consists not in that: But when the soul do's go to the Lord, & maintain his peace with God, and love to the people of God, and joy in the holy Ghost,

here

here is the Kingdom of God; *He that serves Christ in these things*, the Kingdome of God is come into his soul.

He that thus submits to the Lord Christ; he must first be a man wearie of his own counsels, and must loath himself: When the Lord hath wearied a man of his own wayes; he sayes, What am I, that the Lord should shew me any mercy? And when the Lord calls him to any service; Lord, What am I, that I should now pray to thee? Bless the Lord, when the Lord doth keep thy heart in this frame; but now when men will honour Christ, and yet *Saul-like* have Christ honour them: Many poor creatures they think it a credit to be in Church-fellowship; and they will seek to know Christ, that they may attaine Church-fellowship, and have honour; but know it, till the Lord do pull down thy base ends, and make thee loath thy self, and so to submit to his blessed will; truly till then, the Kingdome of God is not come to thy soul: Think of these things, for if the Kingdome of God be in our hearts, then look for good dayes; Brethren, let *New-England* be confident of it: but if this be gone from the soules and hearts of men and women in their severall families and places; though they may have the outward Kingdome of Christ, yet the inward Kingdome being not set up: I say no more but what he said, Go to *Palestina*

and *Bohemia*. Certainly, if they had not cast off the Lords government, they had never seen those lamentable dayes; they had outward Ordinances; Oh, but here was the thing; the inward Kingdome of the Lord Jesus Christ, and subjection to the will of the Lord Jesus, and to be for the Lord Jesus; this the Lord saw, was not in them, therefore the Lord hath left them to be lamentable spectacles. Therefore dear brethren, I do beseech you, pray and beg for this Kingdome. Thou sayest, I fall short of this: Know this Kingdome of God is at first like a grain of Mustard-seed, some little lying under the will of Christ; if it be in truth, blessed be God for it; The Kingdome of God is come, and the soul doth weep and mourne after the Lord, that the Lord would bring every thought into subjection.

Know it, the Kingdome of God is come to thy soul; and know it, thou hast Jesus Christ at the right hand of God the Father, interceding for thee; therefore, go home and blesse the Lord, and wonder at his grace, that hath translated thee from the Kingdome of darknesse, to the Kingdome of his dear Son: If the Lord hath let thee finde the beginning of these things in truth, go home, and blesse the Lord for it.

2.

2. Try when the external Kingdome of Christ in his Church is cast off; for we told you, this was Christs Kingdome. 'Tis cal-

led

led the Kingdome of Heaven, *Matth. 25. 1.* And 'tis it which the Lord gives up at the last day to God the Father, and hence, *Mat. 8. 12.* the members thereof are *The children of the Kingdome*; and hence we read of the rulers and governours of it: and the keys, not only of doctrine; but of power and jurisdiction committed by Christ Jesus to it, punctually exprest in Scripture.

Now we know, in the Church there is a three-fold power of Christ in Government:

1. The supreme Monarchical absolute power of Christ, in and by his Ordinances.

2. There is some derivative power of the Church from Christ joyntly together.

3. There is a Ministeriall power of the officers of the Church it self. Hence the Kingdome of Christ is overthrown when these

three are, when this three-fold cord is broken by the sons of men; and if whole *America* cast off these, or any of these; then they

fall to bondage; and if particular persons in Churches do, the Lord will do the like to them much more: *1 Kings 9. 4, 5.* When

*Solomon* had been praying much, the Lord tells him; *If he would walk before him as David his father had done, to keep his statutes,*

*and obey his commandments; then he would be a God, making good his promise; but if not, then the Lord would cast off him and that place.* So *Zach. 14. 17.* *And it shall be,*

*that whoso will not come up of all the families*

*of*

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*of*

of the Earth, to worship the King the Lord of Hosts; even upon them shall be no raine. The Lord is quick in his judgements, and will spare none.

I.

1. There is a supreme power of Jesus Christ in his Church and Ordinances thereof, *Isa. 9. 6. The Government is on his shoulders*; it is true this power is on others also, but he is the maine. *Heb. 3. Moses was only a servant in his House, Christ as a Sonne.* The guidance of all things in the Church doth lye chiefly on him, or else it would never be carried along. Christ is a Son, and that in his own House; into whose hands the supreme power of guiding, and ordering all things in the Church of God is put; the experience of Gods Saints and People doth finde another power, which shewes that the Lord Jesus hath, and doth exercise a mighty power in the ordinances of his Worship; the supreme and kingly power which he exerciseth in the hearts of his people,

Now cast off this kingly power, the Lord himself is cast off; I speak not immediately as in the internal Kingdome, but mediately. And for this, the Lord will bring into bondage, *Luk. 19. 17. Those mine enemies, saith Christ, which would not that I should reign over them; bring them hither, that I may slay them*; which is meant of the Lords external administration by his servants.

Quest.

Quest. When is this done?

Ans. 1.



*Ans. 1:* When men impenitently break Covenant made with the Lord. Especially in his Ordinances of cleaving and submitting to him therein, and remain so with impenitency.

This is the maine and first Original of all the rest. Now it is manifest, the power of Christ Jesus, the supreme power of Christ is cast off; for a man do's professe by this, that not the will of Christ, but his own will shall rule him; Christ shall not be Lord, but as they said, *Jer. 2. 31. We are Lords, we will come no more at thee.* When the League and Covenant between Prince and People is broke, then he is cast off from being King; this is certain, the Lord never did receive any people to himself from the beginning of the world to this day, but he hath done it by some Covenant: Nor never any people took the Lord to be their God, but by some Covenant, they bound themselves to the Lord. Whereby they were either made his people, or continued to be his people, and he their God; but I cannot now stand to clear this. Now look, as when the Lord breaks his Covenant, he casts them off from being his people; (though this he never doth to the Elect) So when people break Covenant with him, they cast him off as much as in them lyes, from being their God; they do as much as in them lyes, make the Lord to

*Ans. 1.*

be no God. You shall see therefore, *Hosea* 10. 3. *They say, We have no King; because we feared not the Lord. It is the speech of Conscience, and that at a sad time; where in they did not fear the Lord; They have spoken words, swearing falsely, and breaking the Covenant.* In their time of Covenanting with the Lord, there seemed to be much sorrow and humiliation; yet in these very Covenants, *Hemlock* did spring up, and hence captivity came. Many times the Covenants that are made, there is such outward seeming reality; that not only men, but the Lord speaking after the manner of men, He thinks certainly these Promises, these Covenants will never be broke; yet they are broken. *Isa. 65. 8, 9, 10. I said, surely, saith the Lord; This is a people that will not lie.* Such profession, and such acknowledgements, &c. so it is said; *In all their afflictions, he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence did redeem them: But afterward, they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: They cast off the Government of the Lord, they would not be under the bonds of the Lord, and so he was turned to be their enemy; this is that which brings captivity and bondage.* *Jer. 2. 14, 15, &c. Is Israel a servant, saith the Lord? yea shall I see the reason why he was so; I have broken their iron yoke, saith the Lord, and I have burst thy bonds; and I have planted thee a noble Vine; yet hast thou*

*thou degenerated:* and this is that which doth make them vassals or slaves. And in truth you never see Churches laid desolate; but when that time comes, men shall see, and shall professe it. When other Nations shall aske; Why hath the Lord dealt thus with his people? The answer shall be clear; They have broken the Covenant of the Lord. When many miseries come upon particular persons, what is the cause of it? then remember the Covenant thou hast broken with the Lord. *Isa. 24. 5, 6. They have transgressed the Law, speaking of the whole earth; And they have changed their Ordinances, and broken the everlasting Covenant.* A people that might have had everlasting mercy, they would not submit to the Lord, they have broken this everlasting Covenant of the Lord: Now what followes? *The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof;* and hence heavy things that are there written, shall befall the whole world; It is a sin that defiles the earth men tread on, and the houses men inhabite in, for it is a sinne against most light: They which make Covenants have a great deal of light, and also most will. And that do's aggragate a sinne; when the whole heart, as it were, do's give up it self to a lust, and breaks hereby all bonds. And it is a sin that men might avoid, if they would be watchful against: For it is a sinful thing to make a Covenant of impos-

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ſible things, therefore it lyes heaue on the conſcience of men afterwards; I might have been better, and might have walked better; Nay, it is a ſin that do's deſtroy the Law of the Lord: this ſin it do's deſtroy the very will of Chriſt. Had'ſt thou never been bound in Covenant; had'ſt thou laid by this Covenant, the will of God had been kept whole. As cords not uſed, are kept whole; but when broke, are utterly ſpoiled. When a man do's bind himſelf by a Covenant to the Lord, and then break it; he do's as much as in him lyes, to deſtroy the Lord from being King. 'Tis true, the ſaints and people of God may be ſaid in ſome caſe to break Covenant, but yet they never impenitently break Covenant with the Lord; they may break Covenant with the Lord very often, but yet it is with them as thoſe in Judges 2. 1, 4. When the Angel of the Lord came to them, and they were under grievous ſad bondage; ſaith he to them from the Lord: *I have brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and I have broke your bonds; and I have ſaid, I would never break Covenant with you: and I ſaid, you ſhould make no League with the Canaanites, but ye have not obeyed my voice; why have ye done this?* And all the people heard this; and it is ſaid, *All the people wept.* Doubtleſſe ſome were ſincere, though happily many were full of hypocriſie; and ſo the ſincere heart laments it, and renewes his

Covenant. The poor soul hath nothing to say many times, though the Lord should bring never so much misery on it; yet the soul stands weeping before the Lord, that it hath broke the Covenant of the Lord, and made void the Covenant of the Lord; yet the Saints they never break it wholly, they never depart wholly from the Lord.

Now when a people shall impenitently break Covenant, as hath been said: that men can study arguments, how to nullifie Church-covenant; nay, worse when in Covenant, then ever before; and the businesse is, they are loath to be in bonds; when men shall grudge the truth of the Lord, others if their judgements be not set against it; yet notwithstanding, in deed and practice, they live as if they had never been in Covenant. Once they were a pleasant plant; but now they are degenerated, as the Lord doth there complaine. Beloved, when it is thus, the League between the Prince of peace, and the Church is broke; they do as much as in them lyes, seek to cast off the Lord from ruling over them.

2. When there be additions made to the Ordinances of Christ, by humane ordinances and inventions of men; let any set up new ordinances, new inventions of men, they set up new gods; and they do as Subjects set up new Kings, which is indeed to pull down him that was, and so they do to Jesus Christ; they

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they do deny the supreme headship of Christ, and his authority over them; though it may seem a small thing, yet thus it is: And hence ye shall observe *Jeroboams* calves, though they worshipped the same God which was at *Jerusalem*, varying only in circumstance; yet the Lord professeth, that *they had set up new Gods*, and so indeed did pull down the true God and his government from over them, and this brought bondage. And hence, *Col. 2. 18, 19. Let no man beguile you of your reward with a voluntary humility, saith the Apostle, and worshipping of Angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, &c.*

Whatsoever pretence be upon the inventions of men, take heed of that; if it be the inventions of men, in *vers. 19. and not holding the head*; the very headship of Christ is denied, and the ground is this; To say that Christ is not a sufficient means of salvation, of saving his people, and ruling his people; it is to deny the headship of Christ: and likewise to say, that Christ hath not appointed for his people sufficient means for that end; is to say, that Christ is not a sufficient means to rule his people; and he that shall say, Jesus Christ is not a sufficient means, he do's deny the headship of Christ. Now to set up any inventions of men in the worship of God, to be a means to carry the heart to God, is to say, that Jesus Christ hath

hath not appointed sufficient means for that end; and therefore he is not a sufficient means of guiding, and saving, and ruling his people. Nay, this I will adde; let there be any invention added to the worship of God, that's meerly the will of man; nothing else, but only this I would have ye do it; they are such things as do neither make a man better nor worse, but only use them, and ye are commanded to use them, and nothing but the will of man: This is to set up a new Christ, and to pull down the power of Christ Jesus, to submit herein to the authority of man, meerly because of the will of man, that there is nothing seen but his will: There is (it may be) neither good nor hurt in it; It is to make that man a God and Christ; it is peculiar to Christ to do it, and this do's pull down the Lord Jesus Christ from his throne; when there is adding to the worship of the Lord. I need not I suppose speak any thing this way; Only remember to be watchful against this; when the Lord doth send tentations this way into Churches, or into any place; be watchful against new inventions of men to be added or made, they are very sinful; and if ye ask me when we shall look for such times; I need not go farre from my Text.

It is said, that *Rehoboam and all the people walked in the worship of the Lord three years;*  
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but in one year, *Rehoboam* and all the people fell off from the worship of the Lord. O therefore take heed of this, when the temptation comes: 1. When the Lord bows the hearts of those in authority, men of eminency to fall this way, then multitudes follow; as, *vers. 1. Rehoboam* sinned and *Israel* with him. 2. When persecution ariseth for the truth, *Gal. 5. 12. They must be circumcised to avoid persecution.* 3. When mens hearts are surrerted with the Ordinances of God, and wearie of them; when the Ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ, men finde no benefit by them, the heart of man will then be making out after some thing of its own; then we must look for Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, and this curiosity, and the other nicity; then a conceit and imaginary picture of a mans own, is more beautiful then all Gods Ordinances besides, and all Religion is placed there; it may be in extending too far any Ordinance it self, though it may seem little at first; yet when it is thus, then look for evil times.

3. 3. When as a people seek to abolish and destroy any Ordinance of Christ, but especially if on this ground; either because of some outward evil they bring with them, in the fruition of them, or hope of some outward good they shall receive by casting them off, or because of no good they reap by the enjoy-

enjoyment of them : Whensoever ye see this, that they are cast off on this ground, then look for bondage ; for it will come on whole countreys in general, and on particular persons : For Jesus Christ is in his Ordinances, and his Throne is not only in Heaven among the Angels ; but, *Isa. 9. 7, 8, 9. He sits on the throne of David*, among his Church and People ; and pull these down, you pull down Christs throne, *the Prince of peace* ; when ye pull down his Ordinances. *1 John 2. 19.* there were many that did seem to be for Christ, and yet against Christ, this is one signe by which he notes them ; *They went out from us, for they were not of us : that it might be made manifest they were not of us.* Now I say, when men shall pull down the Ordinances of Christ, and withdraw themselves from the communion of Saints ; and when it is for one of these ends, in regard of some outward evil that the Ordinances do bring with them, or some outward good they shall get by casting them off ; then certainly look for bondage. As a Prince that hath one near him, he may attempt change of things in State ; but when he is set a work by a forreigne State, and is a pensioner to the *Pope* or *Spaniard* : Now he is reall to root out the Prince ; and this provokes.

So here, many times a Christian, he may in conscience speak against some of the ways  
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of the Lord, and this may be the condition of the Saints and people of God, and they may speak it in conscience; and this may be tolerated, when it is for want of light; nay they may through stubbornnesse of spirit, call off Ordinances; but when now it is for this reason, though he hath indeed his colour for it; you shall, saith Satan, have this gain and this ease, and these conveniences; and what do you do with Ordinances? and now a man begins to finde out arguments; and saith, Satan, If ye attend to the enjoyment of Ordinances, here be these miseries, therefore away with some of Gods Ordinances at least. Oh, brethren, when it is thus, there is this lecret pension from the world that now had the Lord Jesus, the honour of the world attending on them, then they could make much of them; but because they come with poverty, therefore they can please and speak against them, and in time come to cast off the Ordinances of the Lord Jesus. It is certain the Lord hath bondage for such soules, and you will certainly finde this true one day. *Mal. 3. 14, 15.* The people, they say; *What profit is it that we have served the Lord, and that we have walked mournfully before him?* and hence, they forsooke the Lord. Hence, *Chap. 4. 1,* the Lord threatens, *He will burn them up, both root and branch.* The Lord hath consuming fire for such a day.



The Ordinances of the Lord were too costly for you. *Mark 12. 7, 8. The Lord hath his Vine-yard, he lets it out to husband-men, and he sends for the fruit; and at last the son himself comes to call for fruit. Now say they; Here is the son, let us kill him. Why, what is the matter? out of gaine, that is the business; That the inheritance may be ours. Here is this gaine to be without them, and therefore to cast off Christ: What will the Lord do to these husband-men? he will take away his Vine-yard from them, &c.*

It is the speech of Luther, *Venter in omni religione potentissimum Idolum*: When the belly is served, Christ must be destroyed. Men may have this quiet life without these Ordinances; and hence men bear a private grudge against the Ordinances of the Lord, because the belly is not served. Look as it was with the Jews; they looked for a glorious King to come to them, and Christ came; and though they were told of it before; when he came, he had nothing but a Crosse; and he tells them, *If they will receive his Disciples, they must take his Crosse*. Now, because he came not with pomp, but only with his crosse, this is the great reason, why to this day the Jews do set themselves against the Lord Jesus Christ; because the Crosse came with Christ, that's the cause of it: So when men shall look for great things from the Ordinances of Christ, and

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when they come to enjoy them; they meet with nothing else but Christ and his Cross and disappointments, and desertions; when they meet with this, then Christ is cast off and they professe he is no King, and *Cesar* is our King: and if we take this man to be our King; the *Romanes* will ruine us.

I know it is a hard trial for a man to be put to such a strait; for the Lord to advance the price of his Ordinances at that high rate that all must be parted with for the enjoyment of them. But yet notwithstanding he is for ever unworthy to have the Lord *Iesus* to rule him, that shall therefore make him a King as they did, *John 6*. He was their Cooke, therefore they made him King. Therefore this I say, take heed of disputing against, or denying, or nullifying not only outwardly, but in thy very heart secretly, any of Gods Ordinances; for then the Lord complains of his people, that *their hearts went after their wickednesse*. Oh take heed of doing thus against any one of Gods Ordinances, because straits do attend them: It was the speech of *David*, *Pl. 119*. *Thy law is pure, therefore thy servant loveth it*. Suppose thou shouldest never get any good by any of Gods Ordinances; yet *thy law is pure*, the fault is in thy own heart; and certainly the Lord he will remeber, as there he speaketh, *Jerem. 2.2*. *I remember the love of thy espousals, when thou didst follow me in a law*

of barrennesse, in a land where there was no water. Thy life shall be precious to the Lord, that shalt follow the Lord in all afflictions; yet thy heart doth cleave to the Lord, and follow the Lord in all his Ordinances; therefore this is that I would say, there are many wants now in the countrey; But yet notwithstanding, let the people of God get neer to Christ; *Speak often one to another*, and finde out wayes and meanes to pay your debts, and ly down at the feet of the Lord Iesus, and be content if the Lord will have it so, to be nothing, be content thus; and though thou dost not finde any benefit from the Ordinance of the Lord as yet, yet notwithstanding loath thy own heart, but love them; yet seek after the Lord, and look to the Lord in them; And this is certain, the Lord hath blessings for his people; not only in this life, but as he there speaketh to his Disciples, when they say to him, *Lord, what shall we have?* saith the Lord to them; *You that have followed me, you shall sit on thrones.* But take heed of this, if once ye come to slight Ordinances, and cast off Ordinances, because of these straits and wants, and so forth. And what are your Ordinances, &c? and a generation of men risen up (I think Christians should send forth their gronings to the Lord, that the terrour of the Lord may fall upon them) they deny all the Ordinances of the Lord,

Lord, and the Spirit must teach us only. 'Tis true, the Spirit must do it, but will ye therefore take away the means? and hence, the very Scripture is made an Alphabet for children, and so they do destroy the Ordinances of the Lord. Beloved, if it be from this principle, take heed of it; for if it be, ye will certainly finde bondage.

4.

4. When men do not thus pull down the Ordinances, the throne of Christ; but drive the Lord Jesus away out of his Ordinances, (though they have his Ordinances with them) by their secret defilings, pollutions, spiritual pollutions of the glorious Ordinances of Christ; this the Lord frequently complaineth of in *Jerem.* and *Ezek.* The very great reason why the Lord did leave his Temple, where their fathers did praise the Lord; they had polluted and defiled it; that was the reason of it. They had driven the Lord away from his throne, and this doth pull down the princely power of the Lord in his Churches. I know, there be many sins and defilements; and the sons of men have hidden ways of polluting the Ordinances of the Lord, that a man shall sit under all the Ordinances of the Lord, and as it is said of Mount *Gilboa*, not a dew fall upon him; never see good, when good comes; the Lord is not dear, that is the reason of it. Oh, thy secret defilements of the Ordinances of the Lord, have driven

the Lord farre from you. There are many, I shall only name three principally; that there may be a little heed taken of them.

First, When there is a secret contempt grown upon a mans spirit of the Ordinances of Christ, attended with a secret wearinesse of them: this doth now pollute the Ordinances of the Lord, and this doth drive the Lord from his Ordinances: *Mal. 1. 7. Ye have offered polluted bread; wherein have we done it, say they? this was the cause of it; Ye say, that the Table of the Lord is contemptible;* the meaning is, you do despise my Table and Ordinances, and so now do despise me too, and so ye do vilifie and contemne the Ordinances of the Lord: Therefore saith the Lord, in the conclusion of that Chapter, *vers. 11. From the rising of the Sun, my name it shall be known.* As if he should say, I am not bound to you, I can have a people, among whom my name shall be great; For, saith the Lord, *I am a great King.* If one should have asked men in those dayes what good is in your sacrifices? what great glory can ye see in them? the Saints can see a great deal of glory in mean outlides. Now when this is wanting, the name of the Lord is polluted, and so the Lord driven from his Ordinances. *Heb. 12. 15. Take heed, lest there be in any of you an evil root of bitterness springing up, and many*

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many thereby be defiled. When men do live in secret lusts, or open profanenesse; a man that hath a profane heart, such a heart as doth contemne the portion of mercy the Lord doth offer to him; who like *Eſau*, did sell his birth-right for a messe of pottage.

2. Secondly, Unbrokenesse of heart in the enjoyment of Ordinances, when men live not in a daily sense of the extreme need they stand in of mercy: *Isa. 66. 1, 2. Heaven is my throne, and the Earth is my footstool*; Now observe what the Lord doth there speak, *To him will I look that is poor in spirit and contrite*; such a poor soul, saith the Lord, will I look to; and to these are opposed, such as have not such hearts; but do look only to the Ordinances of the Lord: Now, saith the Lord to such; *He that offereth a lamb, is as if he cut off a dogs neck; and he that offereth incense, as he that bleſseth an Idol*. These were a people that did plead for the Temple of the Lord, and had the Ordinances of the Lord according to his command; but here was their wound they were not broken under the Ordinance of the Lord: This you shall finde, the Saints have many sins and wants under the Ordinances of the Lord: but little doe the world know their gronings before the Lord, and the Lord hath mercy for such soules as are sensible of their need they stand

in of the Ordinances of the Lord.

But now when men have found the Lord in an Ordinance, subduing some particular sin: there are other sins remaining in their hearts, and they stand unremoveable in their hearts; and hence, are the strongest and dearest of all the rest: Now, I say, when men having these sins, and knowing these sins in their hearts and spirits; when as, because I cannot subdue these sins; and they have attended on the Lord in the use of means, and the Lord helps them not; and because, they hope to be saved at last for all these: Hence they come to a truce with their sin, and never go mourning to the Lord; nor say, the Lord hath begun to subdue some of these lusts: Now Lord, go on, but the soul is at truce with his sinnes. Beloved, if there be any pollution of the Ordinances of the Lord, here it is; that men come with unbroken hearts to the Ordinances of the Lord; that never feel your need of them, and wounds and sores that are in your hearts, that men do stand with those very sins, that they think they cannot subdue; and because, they cannot ease themselves of them, therefore they give way to them. When men keep these sins with unresistible hearts of them, ye do resist the holy Ghost, ye feel not your need of the Lord; therefore ye keep your sins, and your woes on shall have for them.

3.

Thirdly, Where there is a spirit of unbelief, that there is not a seeking to Christ Jesus, to wash away the pollutions of his heart and life, in his attending upon the Lord in his Ordinances. *Tit. 1. 15. To the unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their minds and conscience is defiled. Exod. 30. 29. It is said, Every thing that touched the Altar was clean;* and hence, without this, all is unclean: When a poor soul shall come to the Lords Ordinances, and prepare himself before he come; and in all, it hath many weaknesses, yet it doth leave it self with Christ; every thing that doth touch this Altar, is sanctified, and is not polluted. But now when men shall enjoy Ordinances and make no great matter of sins in Ordinances; especially if secret: such is the venemous nature of sin, it doth defile the earth a man doth tread on: Now when men shall have these sins, and know them and yet never leave themselves with Christ and lay themselves on this blessed Altar by faith; they do pollute the Ordinances of the Lord.

4.

Fourthly, When the soul doth not so openly, manifestly drive away the Lord; but when men shall come to the Ordinance and never come to the Lord Jesus in them; now the Lord is cast off. A great Principle that comes to a mans house, though he be not driven out of doors; yet if not attended

on, he accounts himself cast off. The Lord Jesus Christ is in his Ordinances, *Ezek. 48. 35.* The Lord is there; the Saints, they come to God in them, and are carried to him by them: Therefore, 'tis said, *Acts 10. 33,* 34. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God, and *Psal. 84. 7.* Every one of them in Sion appeareth before God. Now the Saints and people of God, when they do thus come to the Lord, they finde many difficulties to break through, a vallie of *Baca*. Sometimes their heart is turned from the Lord, and sometimes God is turned from them: so that now, the Saints when they do come to the Lord in his Ordinances; They go through the vallie of *Baca*, that they may see God in Sion. But now, when men do never break through difficulties, but give way to a sluggish heart; when it is thus with a people, it is certain the Lord is now cast off; and ye do as good now as live without Christ in the world. *Amos 5. 21.* saith the Lord, I hate your new Moons, and Sabbaths; For these forty yeares ye never sacrificed to me, *vers. 25.* Did they not sacrifice those forty yeares to the Lord in the wilderness? It was the very thing they came out of *Egypt* for, that they might sacrifice to the Lord: Yet saith the Lord, ye did not sacrifice to me; truely here was the thing, they did sacrifice, but to enjoy communion

munion with a God, that they did not; the Lord he saw none of that, and this is the frame of many a man, ye never heard a Sermon; ye never brok through your difficulties to come to a God in Ordinances: therefore, in truth, though you had them, yet it is as if you never had them; because, ye never did enjoy the Lord in them.

Therefore, this is that I would say: Oh, Brethren, let the Saints, let it be the care of all the faithful and people of God; the first thing that ye do, before ye come to hear a Sermon, or receive a Sacrament, or to any Christian communion, or other Ordinance of God: Before thou do'st come, indeavour it at least to bring thy soul to a God, to Christ, above all Ordinances, and break through the difficulties; heart is dead, and minde is blinde, and God is gone; but yet break through difficulties, and wrestle with the Lord in prayer, and then ye will finde the blessing of the Lord. The great reason why we enjoy not that mighty presence of the Lord in his Ordinances, it is this; Men come to Ordinances, and would enjoy Ordinances, but they never broke through difficulties, to come to a God: When men shall come to Ordinances only, (and blessed be God we have the temple of the Lord;) truly this will do you no good in the world.

5.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Degree of casting off the supreme power



power of Christ in his Ordinances ; many times when the soul cannot come to Christ, the Lord comes to it : Now then the supreme power of Christ is cast off , when the soul is unwilling or carelesse , to receive the stroke of the Eternall power of the life of Jesus into his heart ; but contents himself with some beginnings, some sips and tastes, and doth not lye under the stroke of the eternal Spirit of the life of Christ.

Look as it is with a company of Subjects, they are in some great Town , that stands it out against a Prince ; If the Prince send to them , and they parlie with him , and they are thankfull for his gifts, and glad of his parlie ; but yet notwithstanding , they are unwilling to receive the Prince, with all his power to come into the Town ; if they be unwilling to do that, and are loath to joyn sides against the other party , they cast him off from being King: So it is here , when men come to the Lord in Ordinances , the Lord he parlies with them, the Lord he sends promises, and they are marvellous precious things ; and they have some taste of what the Lord do's send , and it is sweet to them; But now , because they have lusts in their hearts ; the Lord saith, make warre against thy lust, and open the gates that I may come in : If so be , a man now out of secret love to his sin , he content himself with the promises of Christ ; but the life of Christ, he cares

cates not for that, he uses not all means that he may finde that, the supreme power of the Lord Jesus is now cast off, and I know no difference between such a people and Capernaum; they did enjoy the Gospel of God, but now to entertain the Lord Jesus in his spiritual power, this they were loath to come to; therefore, saith the Lord, *Wo to thee Capernaum*; the mighty work of Jesus Christ in their hearts, this they never cated for. Saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 10. 5. *The weapons of our warfare, they are mighty through God.* As poor things as you think the Ordinances of the Lord to be, they are mighty through the Lord: When Christians shall not be willing to receive this mighty power of the Lord Jesus Christ truly, now the Kingdome of Christ is cast off. *John 6. 49. Your fathers ate Manna in the Wildernesse, and are dead, that was outward Manna; but he that eateth me, shall live for ever.*

In one word thus; this is certaine, a man never gets good by any Ordinance, nor the Lord Jesus doth never attaine his end in any Ordinance, till there be an everlasting power and life of Christ Jesus communicated by the Ordinance. *There, saith he, God commandeth his blessing, life for evermore; mercy, for ever comforting; and light, for ever teaching; and humbling, for ever continuing: and a man will never think he*  
doth

*Psal. 133.  
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doth receive any good till he doth it: For if a man be healed of his blindness, and be blinde presently again; what is he the better? So, if a man hath some flash of light in the Ordinance, blesse the Lord for it. The Lord quickens up the heart to walk with the Lord, Blessed be the Lord for it: Ay, but when the heart now shall lose that life, and strength which it had, (not but that a Christian do's lose to his feeling, but it will returne again.) When he is a hearing, some affection, but he goes away dead as he came: no, but when the Lord comes by his everlasting power and mercy, and life in any Ordinance; now Christ comes in his power, and now ye receive the King in his power, and Christ attaines his end in the Ordinance. This is all that I would say, I do beseech you brethren, in the Lord Jesus Christ: Oh seek for this blessed life, everlasting life Lord, everlasting power Lord; beg for that, and seek for that, and pray for that, and weep for that; do not content thy self with sippings and tastings, look for everlasting life and power to come with the Ordinance; though means be weak in themselves, do not therefore vilifie them: Look upon the brazen serpent, what a poor thing was that to heal the people that were stung? yet the institution of Christ did put vertue into it: So do thou attend on the Ordinances, and never be content, till thou

thou dost finde the Lord, and feel the Lord, and say as some have said; though I feel not the Lord now as I have done, yet I think I shall for ever blesse the Lord. Never be content till ye finde the Lord bringing your heart to this passe, and then the King of glory, the Prince of peace is come; though ye finde not the same power at all times, yet if ye finde that power which do's inure your heart for ever to blesse the Lord, here is everlasting power. Jesus is now come to thy soul; Ay, but when ye content your selves with some movings and beginnings; and sin and Satan as strong again as ever, and ye finde not your sin waling and consuming; in truth the Lord Jesus is cast off, and ye have not the end for which ye come to the Ordinances of the Lord. But then, ye are blessed for ever when ye finde this.

2.

2. There is a derivative power of Christ to the Church, joyntly considered together. *Matth. 18. 17. Go and tell the Church,* is the highest tribunal Christ hath on earth in the Kingdome of Saints. 'Tis Christs high Court of Parliaments, beyond which there is no appeal to any higher power then the Church; and it cannot be meant of the Officers of the Church (which is the fairest interpretation). For the ease may be that there is but one Officer; and is he the Church? as also that he may sin, and not hear of his sin, and must they leave him to himself, at least

least to judge of his sin? The power of Keys was given to Peter, *quā fidelis*, and the power to binde and loose to two or three gathered together in Christs name, Mat. 18. but these things are known.

For the clearing up of this, know that there is a threefold derivative power, which the Lord hath given to the Church joyntly, and not to Elders only: Which may be miserably abused, and so provoke the Lord to take it away from their hands till they know better how to use it; yet when 'tis used according to Christ, now not to be under the power of it, which is Christs power delegated to it, is to cast off Christs Government. And I am confident, the bondage of all the Churches in Christendome, if ye examine the Churches, is continued, because the Lord sees hearts unwilling to submit to him in the government of Churches; and will continue it till Churches know how to use it, and men lye down to the power of it.

I. They have a power given them from Christ, of opening and shutting the doores of the Church, the Kingdome of God on earth: i.e. of letting in, and keeping out any according to Christ, into, or out of their communion: and this I conceive to be one part of the power of the Keys, committed to the Church: The chief office of which, is to open and shut; to receive in, and

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and keep out according to Christ; and hence the three thousand were added to the Church, though the Apostles were guides therein: and *Acts 9. 26.* Paul would have joyned himself, but they would not accept of him; because, they were afraid of him. No body natural or politick, but they have power to receive to them the usefull, and keep from them the hurtfull; so, much more Christs spirituall body. And hence, the Church of *Ephesus* is commended, *Revel. 2. 2.* together with their Angel, for trying those that seemed good, and were not.

Now 'tis true, this power may be miserably abused in opening doores too wide, or locking them up too long, or too fast; and in many sad disorders this way, yet there is this power. Now when men shall refuse Church-tryal, and so communion with the Church; and that not from sense of their unfitnessse and unworthinesse, or some other reason, which is in the sight of God of great weight; but from a carelesse contempt of Gods Ordinances, or Gods people; a man sayes, What care I for the one, and what are the other? and from a resolution never to grow better; they know they are not like to be accepted of them, and they are resolved they will grow no better; they think themselves as good as they, and from a secret unwillingnesse to come to the light, they know things are amisse, and will

will not be known of it; they appear better then they are, and hence they are loath to be seen and judged as they are: Certainly, this is to cast off Christs power; and if continued in, the salvation of your soules is also cast off: *Act. 2. ult. The Lord added to the Church daily, such as should be saved. To the Church. i. e. not the universal Church, but visible Church; where it may be had; such as should be saved. Isa. 60. 14, 15. For the Nation and Kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish; yea, those Nations shall utterly perish:* Lamentable is the condition of many; not so much for not joyning themselves to the Church, as not seeking of the Lord for that mercy; that they may be first joyned to the Lord, and so to his people for the Lords sake.

There are great heaps of people amongst the Churches here that do stand guilty of this, the Lord humble us for it; that content themselves to stand *Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel; Eph. 2. 12. Strangers from the Covenant of Promise; having no hope, and without God in the world.* The Lord is slow to wrath; but there is a three-fold bondage. 1. Of sin and Satan. *Rev. 22. 14, 15. Let him that is filthy, be filthy still.* Nay, though there be some beginnings, yet apt to fall back; because, not planted in the courts of the Lord. And hence, *Col. 2. 5. Joying, and beholding your order, and the*

stedfastnesse of your faith in Christ, order and stedfastnesse are joyned together.

2. Of misery, *Zach. 14. 17.* And it shall be, that whosoever will not come up of all the families of the Earth unto Jerusalem, to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts; even upon them shall be no raine. 3. Sadnesse, hence, *Isa. 56. 7.* Even them I will bring to my holy Mountaine, and make them joyfull in my House of Prayer. To be joyfull in the house of Prayer, is promised to such as joyn themselves to Gods Covenant.

2.

2. They have a power given them of binding and loosing; By admonition of any one, that being received in, shall sin against their communion, and the Lord in it; thereby to defile the whole body, and to provoke the wrath of the Lord against the same, and this is mentioned, *Matth. 18.* and by the Apostle, *1 Cor. 5. 1, 4.* and this is given to them, to use against whatever sinner or offender it be; be he great or small, Prince or Peer; if he be a brother, he is to lye down here: An admonition is an arrest and message from God, from Christ Jesus the King of Kings; *Eglon* must come down from his throne, when this is brought.

Now I grant again, this power may be abused miserably; as to admonish without conviction, or without compassion and love, but in heat & passion, &c. Yet this is the part

of Christs binding power in his Church; which when 'tis done, 'tis bound in heaven.

Now when men come to that passe, that they do not only sin (for that the Lord pardons) but are grown to that height, that they cast off all reproofs, and Christ-like admonitions for sin: sleepe it may be in many teares and prayers before they came, and sweetned with the Spirit of mercy and terror of Christ Jesus in the mouths of his servants, this brings under bondage. 'Tis not sin so much, for this will be; but when they cannot abide reproofes, they are iron morsels, cannot be digested; and hence, sometime hide it, and twenty shifts, and halfe as many lies; or if it be found out, defend it, and fall a fencing and thrusting, and try it out to the last, or extenuate it twenty wayes, that a beam is a mote; and which is worse, their hearts rise and swell, and they bear a private grudge against them, as if they were their enemies, because they tell them the truth; when they should say; *Let the Almighty smile on. Exod. 2. 14. Who made thee a Prince and Judge over us?* When *Moses*, the *Israelites* deliverer was raised up, he thereupon departs, and they lye under heavy bondage; when they cast off his reproof. It's true, a Saint may not for a time submit; but yet it argues a height of spirit for the present, unfit for communion

with God; and the Lord will bring them off, and humble them for their pride. 2 Sam. 23. 6, 7. *But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thornes thrust away; because they cannot be taken with hands.*

A childe of God may have many weaknesses; a hypocrite many excellencies; but the tryall of them is, when they come to be arrested with a sad reproof, how they yield there; and that as unto God; especially when confession shall either discredit their person, or make others question their grace. Snakes will not hisse nor sting, till touched; a sheep will be led to the slaughter, and turn the cheek to him that smites; So should one poor brother do to another, when he comes to him in the name of the Lord; but not many that will so do, but resist and oppose against all reason.

3.

3. They have a power of Communication of good one to another, in way of edification, according to their places in this their communion: So that now, it is not only left in the hands of the Officers, but of the whole Church, and each Member in the Church; according to his place and ability, to edifie the whole; Eph. 4. 16. *From whom the whole body fitly joyned and compacted together, by that which every joynt supplieth, according to the effectuall working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body, unto the edifying it self in love.*

Mem-



Members are not to stand like beautifull pictures in Church-windows, and as costly images in Churches; that have eyes, and see not; cares, and hear not; but they are to be living stones in Gods building; not only to build up themselves, but one another also; that so a man may not only get no hurt from communion of Churches, but he may get good indeed from the same. And if I mistake not, here is the wound of Churches: When Members seek not, and endeavour not the good one of another; and so have Ordinances and means of doing one another good, but exercise them not; or if they do, receive not the good they might hereby; but may say, and shall say at last as he, *Prov. 5. 14. I was almost in all evil in the midst of the Congregation*; Sin prevailing, and sorrowes by little and little, like water in a leaking ship, sinking the poor barke.

*Quest.* What are those means that are left to the Saints themselves, even private Members to exercise in Christian communion for men and women; and so you may see when these are neglected, or not improved, the power of Christ in his Church is cast off so far forth.

*Ans. 1.* The first is, a Spirit of dear Christ-like love one to another; every one to all, and all to that one againe; being ready to expresse it self, in procuring the

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good of others as well as its own: This doth sweeten communion very much, and edifies, quickens, and encourageth a Christian in his whole course marvelously. *Eph. 4. 16. Making increase of the body; unto the edifying it self in love. Love edifieth, 1 Cor. 8. 1. Knowledge puffeth up, but Charity edifieth.* It's the joy of the Saints, and that which makes the Saints to bless God in heaven; where, take any one singly, all joyntly besides honour it, tender it, and seek the good of it; and that one blesteth God, and seeks their good more then its own againe; and this is prophesied, *Zeph. 3. 9. That they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consens, to serve the Lord with one shoulder; to help one another spiritually and outwardly, where there be many griefs and burdens which de Presse the spirits, and make it unserviceable, is removed: As, what is there that doth alienate the hearts of men more from God and his Church, but want of love? Now when mens love grows cold, that a godly man is not esteemed whiles he lives, nor his death lamented so much as the losse of a swine. When people grow strange one to another, and take distastes and prejudices; when they can sit by the fire-side, and censure, and whisper; and make offences, and take offences; and mindes divide, and hearts divide; that if you aske what such a*

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one is good for? the answer is; he is good for himself, and good to breed brawles, and divide a Church; *A Kingdome divided against it self, cannot stand;* and therefore hereby you cast off this Kingdome. Oh, Christians should pray for this, and mourne for want of this; and study peace, and follow it: It should be death to differ, or side, or make a party, one against another.

2. Earnest prayer for the Church, and all in it besides thy self; and that with striving with God, till an answer is given: *Stretch out prayers, as they made for Peter. James 5. 16. Confesse your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. And so Jude 20. But ye beloved, building up your selves in your most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost. This is a means to edifie one another, when there is enlargednesse of heart to pray one for another; Psal 122. 8. For my brethrens sake, I'll wish thy peace.* Sometimes a Christian can do others little good, yet he will wastle for him in his prayers to God: One knowes not the good comes hereby; if withall a man keeps a good Conscience, making conscience of his wayes. And 'tis one of the greatest priviledges that a man hath, when once he hath a share in all the prayers of the Saints as his own; and it answers that *Quere*, What is a Chri-

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Acts 12.5.

than the better for the liberties of the Church?  
*Matth. 18. 19. Again, I say unto you; that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing, they shall aske, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. vers. 20. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.*

Now when people are false herein to their brethren, and to their Covenant; to their God, and to their own soules; (for there is no one prayer thou makest that shall be lost; but if it attaine not a blessing for others, it shall returne again into thy bosome). When there shall be no heart to spend prayer, or shed tears for them, whom Christ hath shed his blood for; now, you cast off the Kingdome of Christ.

Oh Brethren, consider of it, when there shall be many a soul in a Church taken by Satans temptations, and held in temptations, and ready to be overcome by temptations, and it may be, would not be so, but because thou dost not pray; publick Ordinances, the ministry of the word, little good done thereby; because thou hast no heart to pray.  
*Acts 4. 31. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were met together; and they were all filled with the holy Ghost.* This is the reason, the hearts of thy children, servants, and fellow-brethren remaine secure and unshaken by all the Sermon

mons they heare; nothing doth them good, nothing will pierce or penetrate their adamant-like hearts; because, thou hast no heart to pray for them, or at least, not to purpose.

3. Timely Exhortation; when brethren are dead-hearted, and heartlesse in their Christian course. *Heb. 3. 12, 13. Take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another whiles it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* Brotherly exhortation is a remedy against Apostasie of heart; for though a man cannot convince another, yet he may exhort him; and 'tis to be done in season, whiles it's called to day, with due respect, and taking notice of what good there is; with much wisdom, and a spirit of humility, or else thou spoilest all thou medlest withall; putting your selves in their estate, and with hearty unfeigned prayer, that the Lord would accompany the same with his blessing. *Heb. 10. 24. Consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works.* Look over the Congregation, and consider such a Brothers or Sisters estate; one is poor and low, another falling, another very much altered: Now in some cases, a private Brother may do more then a Minister; the Lord help us, and stir us up to this work: Now when this is neglected, many soules are hardened.

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4. Instructing and teaching one another, as occasion serves. *Rom. 15. 14.* And I myself also am persuaded of you my brethren, that you also are full of goodnesse; filled with all knowledge, able to admonish one another. They were able for to instruct and teach one another. *Isa. 54. 13.* They shall be all taught of God. What God teacheth thee, that do thou teach others; what thou gainest by hearing, or by praying, or meditation; by putting questions to others, sometimes to teach, and sometimes to be taught; and this do, if possible, in all occasional meetings, and worldly discourses; mixe with it some sweet truth that God hath taught thee. But now on the other side; when Christians shall meet, and a man is the worse for their fruitlesse discourse, no savour of any thing of God; Let them meet never so long or often, walking or sitting, this is sad.

5.

5. In Comforting those that be sad; *1 Thes. 5. 14.* and *4. ult.* Comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak; Wherefore, comfort one another with these words. There are many sad hearts in Gods Church, and sad things are as wounds to a mans limbes, that make him halt or fall. Oh Brethren, be much in this work; *2 Cor. 1. 4.* Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our

selves

elves are comforted of God; That a soul may say, such a one came to me, and spake some few words to me; but they were as reasonable, as though the Lord had sent an Angel from heaven to speak to me, and of more worth, then if he had given me many pounds: But now, when this also is neglected, that one Christians hath not a word of encouragement to another, but dry and savourless discourse; this the Lord takes very ill at the hands of his people; that have received comfort from himself in the day of their sorrow and distresse.

6. Restoring a Brother fallen with a spirit of meeknesse. *Gal. 6. 1, 2. Brethren, if any be overtaken with a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one with a spirit of meeknesse.* Oh, how will a poor soul bless the Lord for such a Brothers prayers, admonitions, and exhortations, when the Lord shall have brought his heart back again to himself; although before he did most of all disesteem and vilifie him.

Now, when these are not used, or not with a spirit of meeknesse improved, that a man never blesteth God for these; the Lord Jesus is pulled down from his throne, when not done according to the ability, time and place that the Lord affords. And this I wish, the Churches mourn not for another day: For my own part, I do adjudge my self before God and men; as most guilty of

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of this, that I enjoy many sweet Ordinances, and we improve them not; and hence the glory of the Lord fills not his Tabernacle, abides not on his Churches, either to draw others to them, or to make others abundantly blesse God for them.

Now here I will shew you the causes of this.

1.

1. *Not gaining much in private duties*, in Prayer, Meditation, Reading, and daily Examination of a mans own heart: And hence they cannot do good, because they receive none, or very little themselves; they have not a treasure within, hence they can spend little, have no heart or ability to exhort, instruct, comfort: He that keeps not his shop his shop will never keep him. As *Psal. 41. 6* His heart gathereth iniquity to it self, when he goeth abroad, he telleth it.

2.

2. *A low spirit*, which makes a man to have low thoughts, and endeavours, I mean not an humble, but a narrow spirit, not enlarged to hold much, or to do much, hence it doth little. As take a plaine countrey-man, he neither seeks or regards the affaires of the State in publick, because his spirit and condition is low; but Princes do minde and attend to the affaires of the Kingdome, to advance it; because their condition is high, and they know it. *Moses*, he suffered reproach with the people of God, losse of all the honour and pleasure of *Pharaohs* Court; feared not *Pharaoh*, nor losse of life for their sakes:

fakes: For, he saw that God which is invifible; like Saul, when once a Kingdome comes to be in his eye, he leaves off to seek the Affes.

3. Sloth. There are *Thornes*, Prov. 15. 19. and *Lions*, Prov. 26. 13. in a sluggards way: There be many difficulties, businesfes, occasions, and objections; when as if once he were resolved to break thorough them, then the work would go on: Like a man, when he is in his warme bed, he is loth to rife; but when he is up, he would not be in his bed againe, if he might be hired again to put off his clothes: I shall get no good, faith one, nor do none, faith another; and when these businesfes are past, and occasions over; and at another time, I will seek God, and go about Gods worke; and thus a slothfull spirit hinders.

4. Want of Faith. 2 Cor. 4. 13. *Weak-  
liens, and hence we speak.* Faith empties us most, and hence fills us with Spirit and Life of Christ Jesus; hence Steven, full of faith, and the holy Ghost. A lively Christian, when he comes in another Christians company, it may be he knows not what to speak; but he looks up to Christ, and sayes; Now Lord, here is an opportunity in doing or receiving some good; and therefore, now Lord, help.

5. Want of fear of God, and consolation of the spirit of God, from the sense of Gods

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Gods love. *Acts 9. 31.* They walked in the fear of the Lord, and consolation of the holy Ghost; the Church was edified by the consolations of the holy Ghost. A man that's wounded, keeps within, and stirs not; but when he is in health and strength, now hard work is his meat, he cannot live except he worke. *1 Cor. 15. ult.*

6. Not considering the shortness of our time of sowing. *Heb. 10. 25.* Where as, if men were on their death bed, they would wish, Oh, that I had walked more blamelessly, and fruitfully; men care not for a comfortable reckoning as yet.

There are two causes why they receive no good.

1. From a mean esteem of the Saints, looking on them as men, and not as an Ordinance of Christ; their persons, prayers, and speeches. And this is a rule; Men never gain any good by that Ordinance which they despise: if all were Schollers, Ministers, or Saints glorified, they could then esteem them. Hence, *Eph 4. 16.* Edifying is by love; *Making increase of the body; edifying it in self love.*
2. From want of being poor in spirit, and sensible of their extreame need of Christ continually in all means: Beggars will pick up crums, and watch for a word of encouragement. *Isa. 11. 6.* A little childe shall lead the Wolfe and the Lion; that is, when the



the Lord hath humbled the heart of a man. Oh, when a Christian thinks none so poor and shallow, and heartlesse as I, and every one is better then I, however I need more then any: This soul will be glad to suck the brest; and the Lord will fill others with light and life, and his own bowels, to do such a one good. Whereers, else they are shut up, and they finde no good conveyed to them by any of the Ordinances of the Lord, nor any presence of God in them.

3. There is a Ministerial power, committed from Christ by the Church to the ruling Officers thereof. I say, by the Church, for all power in the Church, is properly Christs, yet he nextly communicates it ordinarily to his Church, or multitude of Beleevers, to whom is committed the supreme power of the Keyes in his word, and of binding and loosing, as hath been shewen; and by this Church, this power hath been by Christs appointment, and still is, to be communicated to those that are chosen out of themselves, to be Officers and Rulers over them in the Lord, to exercise the power of Christ over them according to his will. Hence the very power of binding and loosing, opening and shutting, given to the Church, is also given to *Peter* and the rest of the Apostles, and the successors of Christs Apostles in Doctrine, sent of Christ, *John 20. 23.*

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Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted  
 &c. Because, though the power of Commu-  
 nication of it is in the Churches hand, yet the  
 power of usual administration of it is in  
 their hand, whiles they exercise it accord-  
 ing to Christ, yet by the Church. And  
 hence Paul puts a difference between this  
 extraordinary Ministry, as Apostleship  
 and ordinary. Gal. 1. 1. An Apostle not of  
 men, nor by the Will of men, but by Christ  
 for the Church, not by it: Now this I say  
 is by the Church from Christ. Hence, Act.  
 20. 28. The holy Ghost hath made them over-  
 seers; so that 'tis no invention of man, or  
 act of man, or the power of man; but of  
 Christ; and hence refuse to be under the  
 power; men cast off the yoke and power  
 of Christ Jesus.

For though the estate of the Church be  
 Democratical and Popular; and hence no pub-  
 lick administrations or Ordinances are to be  
 administered publicly, without notice and  
 consent of the Church; Yet the government  
 of it under Christ, the Mediator and Mo-  
 narch of his Church, is Aristocratical; and  
 by some chief, gifted by Christ, chosen by  
 the people to rule them in the name of  
 Christ, who are unable, and unfit to be al-  
 Rulers themselves; and to cast off these, or  
 not to be ruled by these, is to cast off Christ.  
 Luke 10. 16. He that rejecteth you, rejecteth  
 me. Num. 16. 3. You are gathered together  
 against

against the Lord; The Lord accounts himself opposed and resisted, when the Officers of his Church are slighted, and their government despised.

*Quest.* What is this power?

*Ans.* 1. *Negatively:* 1. It is not any Lordly pompous power, to bear the bell of great smoakie titles, to govern in worldly pompe; or by worldly rewards, and civil punishments. 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds. It shall not be so with you, saith Christ;* but as I have been without all worldly state, so must you be one to another. And hence, 1 *Peter* 5. 4. *Not being lords over Gods heritage:* Christ never gave his Ministers power of opening and shutting the doors of New-gate, and Bonners Colledge if they would not subscribe, or to confute mens opinions with their own lawes, and binde consciences with chaines of Iron, or to promote his servants by spirituall livings. Christ himself refused to be a judge in civil causes; hence some of our Divines, when they would grāt that *Peter* was *Christ's* successor, and the Bishop of *Rome* *Peters* and *Christ's* Vicar, yet as Christ being on earth, exercised no civil power, so much less may these.

2. 'Tis not any Antichristian illimited power, viz. to have power over many Churches (for that is the main spiritual An-

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*Ans.* 1.

tichristian external power); and the Ministers thereof; for we read in Scripture of many Elders and Bishops in the same Church, *Acts* 20. 28. but never of any one ordinary Minister, or Officer over many Churches; either to governe, or to baptize, as the *Anabaptists* would among them, as many godly plead for now in the misty confusion of *England*. And look as we cry out of one Minister non-resident, that shall have six or ten livings, though he give never so good a stipend; not only because of his pride and covetousnesse, but because of his unconcionablenesse, &c. So here much more of one man Over-seer over many Congregations, it may be a hundred at least.

3. 'Tis not any Magisterial power, *Diotrephes*-like; either to do what they will, *Matt.* 23. 3. and their wills to be their law. No, *Matth.* 28. 20. *Teach all that I command you.* If they do sin, their persons are under the censure of the Church, in case of manifest offence and scandal by the mouthes of two or three witnesses, who being Members of the whole Church, & under it, & being sinful Members; may, if the case need it, be proceeded against by the whole. Neither have they any power to act any publick Ordinance w<sup>ch</sup> concernes the whole Church, and where 'tis bound by Christ to judge, without the privy and consent of the Church, as to elect Officers, admit Members, cast out offend-

ers in the Vestry without the knowledge of the Church, one of the blaines of the reformed Churches, which the Apostles with their extraordinary power never did themselves, much lesse should these. 1 Cor. 5.

4. They have no immediate power of rule immediately given by Christ, over any one particular Church, but mediate by that Church where they are; their gifts of teaching and ruling are immediately from Christ; but their actuall power to exercise it over this or that particular Congregation, is by that Church only. Hence Deacons that were only to take care for the outward estate of the Church, Act. 6. 3, 4. they were ordained by lifting up their hands. This is Apostolical power, and an intrusion, and cuts asunder the force of the argument of Mr. Ball his book of power for Presbytery, &c.

2. What is their power affirmatively?

Answer. 1. They have a power given them of ruling and governing from Christ by the people; hence they are called Rulers, and such as rule, and are over Gods Church; hence they have a strict charge and command from the Lord to do it. Hence Paul at Ephesus, when he was with them three years, yet had Rulers there; and vers. 28. Feed Gods flock bought by blood; over which, not men; but the holy Ghost hath made you Overseers; Christs Church being like sheep, apt to stray and perish, unlesse these watch

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against wolves, and these the Apostle at his last parting left; hence also they are to give an account of it at the last day. *Heb. 13.* Hence those cast off the Lords government over them, who will have no Rulers or Governours in Churches, who shall either speak it or think it, but leave all to themselves and their liberty; to teach, baptize, to order things in Church, and so by this means they are not only single Members or Officers; but Pastor, and Teacher, and Elder and all. This generation of men, sons of *Korah*, are risen up in these latter times; especially amongst Anabaptists, Familists, and rigid Separatists, and who are privily crept into *New-England-Churches*; Whose condemnation sleeps not, Satan carrying them to extreams, and pride lifting them up above themselves, above Men, above Officers, above Ordinances, and above God. That look as Common-wealths are under greatest bondage, where there is an Anarchy, where every one must be a slave, because every one must be a Master; So in the Churches, no greater bondage can come then this, the foundation of all confusion, and the scandall of the wayes of God which through mercy his people here enjoy.

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2. This power is more then any one private Member hath in the Church, who is not an Officer; It would be a most simple ridiculous thing, if there should be Election,

tion, Ordination, many Prayers, much trial of men, for to rule, and guide, and govern, separation from the rest, and yet not to have any more power then any one private Member. Hence the Apostle sayes, *Submit to them that are over you.* 1 Thes. 5. 12. and Heb. 13. 17. *Obey them that guide you, or rule over you.* Hence those that do acknowledge Governours in the Church for names sake, but they are such as have no more power then a private Brother; they do but allow the name, but deny the thing: Hence say they, they are to watch; so are private Members: they are to admonish; so is every private Member: they are to rule; the word signifies to guide and go before another.

*Ans. 1.* The word to rule, 1 Thes. 5. 12. is the same word with 1 Tim 3. 4. 5. He that rules his own house, which is a little more then they that are besides him in the family; though this be not such a paternall power, yet it is somewhat more then that of private Members. And that Heb. 13. 17. is a word which is the same with that in *Matth. 2. 6.* Governour, particularly spoken of Christs government, to feed otherwise then private Members.

*Ans. 2.* 'Tis true, they are to watch and admonish in way of Christian duty; but others in way of Christs authority, as being his Ambassadors, and sent of him; as in a

*Ans. 1.*

*Ans. 2.*

family, one servant should watch over another; but the chief Steward, he is to do it with authority in the absence of his Lord. And hence doth it with more majesty and power, and it takes, or should take deeper impression; so it is in Elders of a Church.

Hence also, when men shall cry for liberty to speak, an Elder forbids it; What, may not the Church have liberty? true, but you are not a Church. An Elder reproves, & they will reprove again; What, shall not the Church have liberty? An Elder gives reasons strong, and unanswerable for some thing to be done; a young fellow shall step up, and say, without ground, or shew of it, that's your light, and mine is otherwise: What, may not the Church have liberty? Yes, but you are not the Church; this is very sad, and hath been a root of greatest scandal that ever Gods wayes had. If Elders sin openly, 'tis another case, and somewhat also is there to be done; *Submit yourselves one to another, much more to an Elder, &c.*

3.

3. In the execution of their office according to Christ, they are over the whole Church. Their persons indeed are under them, in case they sin, and sin in the execution of their office, they are to be subject; not only to the whole, but to the least Member of the Church: Suppose the sin be not only

suspected,

suspected, or reported, or apprehended by  
 one, but two or three witnesses at least, as  
 1 Tim. 5. 19. but whiles they execute it ac-  
 cording to Christ, they are therein above the  
 Church, and 'tis bound to be subject there-  
 in; and not to be subject, is to refuse  
 to be under Christs government. Hence,  
 Heb. 13. *Obeys them that rule you;* he  
 speaks to the whole Church, which was  
 not in evil, but in good things accord-  
 ing to God; and yet in evil things; look  
 on them as those over them. *Exempli  
 gratia,* A Minister in the execution of his  
 office, let him preach Christs eternal truth,  
 deliver it and prove it; What ever humane  
 weaknesse there be in him, what ever dark-  
 nesse there is in others; yet he is therein a-  
 bove Churches, Kings or Angels; and  
 they shall answer it at the great day, that  
 do not submit. In regard of my person  
 said *Luther*, I'll fall down before any; but  
 in regard of the truth I administer, I look  
 on the Kings of the earth as nits, nay dust,  
*Eccl. ad Regem Angl.*

So in the power of the Keys in opening  
 and shutting out Members; they have tried  
 and proved such a one; if they sin, as they  
 may, then give them reasons; but if not,  
 they are bound to submit. And that not as  
 unto other Christians, but as unto an Ordi-  
 nance, stamp with an authority of God  
 upon them; indeed they are not to do any  
 such

such thing without the presence, consent, and judiciary power of the Church; and the Church may not submit to what Elders propose to be Christs minde; but then they cast off the Lords power, which they are to answer for another day. 1 Cor. 12. 28. they are called Governours. Now as a Ruler of a Ship is to order it, though a King be in it, over him in that respect, and the King is to be guided by him whiles he guides it right; but if not, the King hath power over him, to command others to take the place, or cast him overboard.

'Tis true, they are but servants to the Church, because they are by the Church, for the Church, and to help the Church, 2 Cor. 1. 24. and are subject to them if they sinne; but yet they are servants unto Christ, and in exercising his power according to him, above the Church, 2 Cor. 4. 5. *We preach Christ, and our selves your servants for Christ*; yet therein above them. Hence being their servants; if they sin, they are under the censure of the Church, and the Church may cast them by. So being Christs servants; if not submitted to, the Lord doth account himself cast off.

1. Because their power thus rightly executed, is the power of Christ Jesus: Hence refuse it, you refuse to be subject to him; If men will not be ruled by Gods Ordinances, but will rule Ordinances, they go about to rule Christ.

2. Be.



2. Because, if there shall be no subjection here, 'tis profest licentiousness, and not liberty in Churches; You have liberty, but what liberty? to be subject to Christs power is pure liberty, and that in his servants. Now when men will not, and shall refuse without shewing reason, or convicting Elders of sin; this is to cast off the Government of Christ.

3. Elders are helpers of people; and there is no people but will stand in need of such helps, if humble, and able to discern, to attend the publick good; to teach and convince, &c. Hence, when there is no sin appearing in the execution of their office, they should with a holy fear submit; and say; If ye be faithful watchmen, what am I that I should be unsatisfied? my ignorance may mislead others, &c.

4. They have power to over-see, when they see cause, *Acts 20. 28.* and to see into, and enquire into the estate of the flock of God; to know their spirituall condition, so far as is fit to be known, that so they may be comforted in the work of Christ; though there be no sin break out, nor they come to them. *1 Thes. 3. 5, 6.* The Apostle enquired into their faith, charity, and prayer; *vers. 7.* and hence was comforted, &c. And this *Paul* doth not as an extraordinary man, but leaves his example as a president to the Elders of *Ephesus*; to go from house to house, and

and enquire, to teach and exhort. *Acts 20.*  
 for Elders are to prevent scandals as well as  
 to remove them; lest when they come they  
 say, Oh that I had known this before, espe-  
 cially where they see need. Now hence it is  
 that men cast off the government of Christ,  
 when they will not have their spiritual con-  
 dition searched into, the Elders foot is now  
 too great for his shoe, I am to give an ac-  
 count to God; so are they also of thee, now  
 thou canst not give it if thou enquirest not  
 how thy condition stands, neither can they  
 with comfort unlesse thou tellest them how  
 it stands with thee. 'Tis true there are many  
 secret things they can never finde out, yet  
 they are to attend their duty.

The Ministers charge is to cast the seed,  
 the Elders duty is to enquire after the fruit in  
 the husbandry of Christ; it is a sad condition  
 when a man hath such a wound that he will  
 not go to the Lord for help, because he loves  
 it; and will not have man to know it because  
 he is ashamed of it; But you shall know it  
 at the last day that the Lord would have  
 healed you, and you would not, but can quar-  
 rel and snap at the Elders when they come  
 to enquire of your condition; and why do  
 ye inquire? you take too much on you.

5.

5. They have power to guide and coun-  
 sel and warne the Church, at least in all  
 weighty affaires which may concerne them  
 and their common good: hence they are  
 called

called guides and leaders to the people, Heb. 13. 17. Mal. 2. 7. I do not mean in all personal things. Acts 20. 31. I warned you of wolves, &c. Hence

1. For members in matters of great and weighty affaires which concerne the good of the whole Church, may all Churches, never to enquire if Abel is casting off the Lord, as in election of Officers in Church, and Magistrates in the Commonwealth, &c.

1.

2. Hence to receive any opinion different from all the Elders in the Church, and never so much as speak, much lesse come to a sad debate about it, is to cast off this yoke, and contrary to covenant, and Elders would never have undertooke the care of the Church without it; and it sads their hearts that they do their work feebly.

2.

3. Hence to propose a doubtful question to the Church, which may trouble, or bring an offenders sin to the Church without consent of the Elders, who may encourage them if of God, and ripen it for the Church, or discourage it if not of God. Christ when he writes to the Churches, he superscribes his epistles to the Angels, & if one man may propose a doubtful opinion, another may, and a third, and one may side with another, and so much confusion will follow.

3.

4. Hence when men shall not take warning of evils to come upon evident grounds,

4.

it's

it's casting off the Lords yoke; & when they come on thee, thou mayest say it is because I have refused to hearken to my watchers, they warned me of this, and it may be you will finde else such evils which the scripture notes, according to the word of the Lord by his servant Elisha, so will the Lord make good the words and threatnings of his faithful servants.

5.

5. They have power of publick reproof of any member of the Church, in case of plain, open and publick offences; others without leave cannot, nor ought not, although others may tell them. Reproofs are part of the power peculiar to the governours in any society, where governours are present especially, and at hand; as now in a family, no wise man will suffer brawles amongst his children or servants, but faiestie, tell me. 1 Tim. 5. 20. Now this is sad when a man cannot forbear reproof of others, nor hear reproofs of Elders, but turns again, and will be judge in his own cause though never so grosse, a signe of an extream forward high spirit, Hosea. 4. 4. which makes the Lord to take away Elders as soon as any sin is committed, and stop their mouths, Exod. 2. Who made thee a judge, &c. And when afflictions come, and you then enquire, what is the cause of it? you may be sure this is one, even by the confession of the blindest deboult ones. Prov. 5. 12. How have I hated

Instruction

Instruction, and not obeyed the voice of my teachers?

6. They are to feed with power as the word *ἐκτακτικῶς* signifieth, every one in their places, publicly instructing, exhorting, comforting, and privately also; which though private men may do, yet here is the stamp of authority also, and so the more power the more blessing usually, if God be acknowledged therein. *Acts* 20. 28. Hence

1. When men despise their food; they are poor things they speak, and they can see no matter in them; and that after study, prayers and teares, &c. and so cast it by; this is to cast off the Lord.

2. When men grow gluttoned and full, *Mat.* 1. ult. although they eat not a bit, and hence thrive not, but a spirit of slumber and a deep sleep grows on them, that they cannot be awakened by all the ordinances of God. These things call for chaines. *Amos* 8. 11. *When will these Sabbaths be ended?* for which the Lord threatens a famine, and then you shall know the worth of them in the want of them.

These things I speak. 1. Because I see the Apostle in many of his epistles layes this charge on the people. *Heb.* 13. 7, 17. 'tis twice repeated. 1. Lest Officers be sadden in their worke that's heavy. 2. Lest it be unprofitable for you; you think to get this and that good by it, but it will be nothing in the conclusion.



2.

2. Because we lie under slander of many, and that godly, as if Elders in Churches were but only ciphers.

3.

3. Because people begin to run to extremes, Elders taking all to themselves, and people taking all for themselves.

4.

4. Because if here be not attendance you will quickly see the miserable ruine and fall of Churches, more sad then the burning of *Solomons* temple. 'Tis observed of *Jerobbbam*, when he was sacrificing he had no leprosie, but when he stretched out his hand against the Prophet it was withered; for the Lord will not bear here; they may be despised, and you may think *your selves Kings without them*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 8. and they will say so, they may rule as they will, but you will do as you list. But the Lord will be provoked for this, all *Sarans* subtilty lies here; disgrace the Elder sayes one, divide them sayes another, pull them down sayes the third, that there may be no King in *Israel*, no nor in *Sion*, that we may do what is right in our own eyes.

3.

3. Try when the external Kingdome of Christ in a Common-wealth is cast off; for when any Common-wealth is ordered according to the sacred will of Christ, by such persons especially whose aime is to advance the Kingdome of Christ by their rule and power; 'tis then become the Kingdome of Christ Jesus. And hence, *Revel.* 11. 15. when the seventh trumpet is blowne, and the

Lords

Lords last wo is come upon the world and the Kingdomes thereof, which have opposed Christ, and those Kingdomes are turned to imbrace the Gospel, & submit to the power of Christ in the same, then it's said, *The Kingdomes of the world are become the Kingdomes of Christ*; it's not said, Christs Kingdome is become the Kingdome of the world, as if Christ should put down civil authority, and exercise rule by it himselfe, but, *The Kingdomes of the world, i. e. the various Kingdomes are become Christs. i. e. to advance it, and debase themselves at his feet.* Eph. 1. 22. it's said *All things are put under Christs feet, and he is head over all things to the Church.* (that is, universally, chiefly, nextly, particularly,) so then earths Kingdomes when they are subject to Christ, for his ends, now they exercise the Kingdome of Christ, in a manner; and hence to cast off this, is to cast off the Kingdome of Christ; and so to provoke the Lord to put us under bondage.

*Quest.* When is Christs Power and Kingdome cast off here?

*Ans.* There is a double Power in the Kingdomes of the world, which I suppose, when they become Christs Kingdomes, they will retaine.

First, There is some supreme or higher power; in the chief Magistrates, Princes, or chief Court of Justice.

Sec ondly,

*Quest.*

*Ans.*

I.

2.

Secondly, There is some inferiour power by some superiour power, set over particular Persons, Cities, and Townes, for the well ordering of them. The ground of this is, that natural necessity which *Jethro* propounded from God to *Moses*, *Exod.* 18. 17. 18. *'Tis not good for thee to be alone, but thou wilt both wear out thy self, and thy people.* Publick authority must have many eyes, and many hands; and like a River that is to water a Countrey, it must have many streams. And hence they had in the Common-wealth of *Israel*, which was for God, in every City Judges, and in Townes, such as were over fifties and tens, *Exod.* 18. 25. which it seemes continued long, till all fit men for government were taken away; and then *Isaiah* 3. 3. their condition is lamented.

Now the forme of this government is not in all Common-wealths alike, the Lord not binding to any; and hence called *anastrophe*, an ordinance of men. Hence it is a foolish vanity to aske a warrant in Scripture for such a forme of Government; for humane wisdom may teach this, though not in Church-government. Yet this supreme and inferiour Government hath been in all Kingdomes, *1 Pet.* 2. 13, 14. to both which subjection is required; to refuse to give it, is to cast off the Lords Government; and there are couched foure reasons in that place to prove this.

1. Do

1. *Do it for the Lords sake*, for the name of Christ; and that honour and majesty of Christ stamped on them, submit; hence cast them off, you cast by respect unto; nay, the name of Christ Jesus.

1.

2. Because they are in the roome of the Lord, to do the work of the Lord; *In punishing evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.* It's true, they may abuse their power otherwise; but yet their power is one thing, and their abuse of it another.

2.

3. Because; *this is the Will of Christ, and you do well in it; and so you shall stop the mouths of foolish men, apt to speak against you for sin.*

3.

4. Because, *this is the liberty of Christ, vers. 16. and you are servants to Christ in it; and to do otherwise is licentiousnesse; and their liberty to exempt themselves from the power of lawfull authority, was but a cloak of it.* For so it seems in those dayes, some held it part of their Christian liberty to be free from all bonds; and said, that Christ had made them Kings on Earth, &c. So that if they did cast off subjection, they did cast off the name of Christ, power of Christ, will of Christ, liberty of Christ Jesus. Even under heathen Magistrates, what then do they that cast it off under others.

4.

*Quest. 2.*

*Quest. 2.* When is Christs Government cast off in respect of the supreme power?

*Answ.*

*Answ.* Those that know the questions about the power of Princes and people,  
I especially

especially reviv'd in these last dayes; cannot  
but know the field is large, where now I am;  
I shall be wholly silent, unless I say greater  
cause of speaking then I do, and only point  
out two or three particulars to prevent such  
fins as stand next to the doing, to break in  
upon this power.

1.

When men cast off secretly dread, and  
fear, and reverence of the Majesty, Domini-  
on and Sovereignty that God stamps upon  
authority; and so come to have low, mean  
thoughts of them, and contempt of them.  
It's true, none should be elected; but such  
men can honour for some eminency on  
their, and that of God, seen in them. *As*  
*men fearing God, chief amongst the people*  
was the councell of God by *Jethur* and  
*Moses*; but when they be Elected, now  
despise them, and hence not to bow the  
knee, or stife the hat, and speak rudely be-  
fore them; it's casting off; not only their  
power in sight of God; but the very root  
of it, which is honour. And hence in the  
5th Commandment, all duties to them are  
comprehended under the word *Honour*.  
And who sees not but this is a sin, which  
is apt to attend the spirits of men in a place  
of liberty, and in our weak beginnings, and  
day of small things? Reports are abroad,  
that no men of worth are respected; and  
hence the Countrey is neglected. I cannot  
say so after many thoughts; for I am per-  
swaded



loaded no place in Europe more ready to  
honour men of publick spirits, & of eminency  
in piety, and humility, without the seeing  
of which, no Countrey more apt to vilifie;  
because grace is the glory in the eye of a  
Countrey led by Religion: But take heed lest  
such a spirit befall us; lest the Lord put out our  
Lamp, and cast our Crown down to the ground.

When men seek to pluck the sword of  
vengeance for sinne hurting the Common-  
wealth, out of their hands; without which,  
the greatest power in a Common-wealth, is  
lost, paganism, and a meeke vanity, almost a  
nothing. *1. Cor. 13. 4. He is Gods*  
*Minister*; yea, when he gives good coun-  
celle, and when he is a revenger, to execute  
wrath on him that doth evill: So that be  
the evill what it will be, if it hurt the Com-  
mon-wealth, to be against any wholesome  
law, thereof, he is Gods Minister to punish  
trivially. In the first Reformation of Ge-  
neva, there were as many heresies and er-  
rors, almost as truths of God; *Servetus*,  
he denied the Deity of Christ; whereupon  
the Magistrate put him to death, who died  
with extreme horror; Whereupon heresies  
being begun to be snibbed and blasted, *Bellius*  
writes a book, 1. That men should punish  
no heresie at all; but be merciful and meek;  
as Christ was to the adulterous woman.  
2. If they did; yet that Magistrates they  
should not punish for errors or heresies.

2.

3.

3. If they did, yet not with such severity as they begun. To all which, Beza hath given a most learned and solid answer, detesting the hypocrisie of the man, and the sad consequences of such opinions, if their power should be diminished.

I conceive, 'tis casting off Christs power, to take away power from Magistrates to punish sins against the first Table, of which errors and heresies in Religion are part. It's as clear as the Sun, that the Kings of Judah that were godly did it, and were commended for it; and 'tis as clear, they were commended for it, not as types of Christ, but because they did therein that which was right in Gods eyes, and according to the commandment of the Lord; Which judicial commandments, concerning the punishing of Sabbath-breakers, false Prophets, Hereticks, &c. Gods fence to preserve morall lawes; they are of morall equity, and so to be observed to this day of Christian Magistrates, &c. To exempt Clergy men in matters of Religion from the power of the civil sword, is flat Popery; by means of which Antichrist hath risen, and hath continued in his pompe and power so long together; The indulgence of Princes towards the Papal function in matters of Religion, hath undone Christendome.

'Tis true, every error is not to be immediately committed, but when 'tis like a

gan-

gangrene; of a spreading nature; then the Magistrate in due time must cut it off speedily.

*Object.* Leave them to the Church.

*Ans.* True, leave them 1. there. But 2. Sometimes the Church will not; sometimes they are not of any Church. A Papist, an Arminian may come in and leaven and damne many a soul, for which they had better never been; If it were but one; and if he sayes, I do it with a meek spirit, (then trick of late) and none must meddle, because mercy must be shewen to these wolves. A wise shepherd had rather let a hunter come in and kill one of his sheep, then let a wolfe or fox escape, *Mat. 26. 29.* and see his people persecuted, then their soules worried.

Heresie and Error hath this property; it ever dies by severe opposition; and truth ever riseth the more; because Christ is against the one; Hence it must fall; but for the other, hence it shall rise by its fall: Hence, let your selves against this, tis to oppose the power of Christ Jesus. And hence in *Henry* the 8<sup>th</sup> time, the Abbies fell, and never could rise to this day; but the fixe Articles against the Saints pursued with blood, made them increase the more.

3. When men will not submit to the wholesome Lawes of Magistrates; which are either fundamental, and continuing; or

*Object.*

*Ans.*

3.

Orders that have their date and time of expiring, made for common good. When men will either have no lawes or as good as none, or submit to none but what they please. *Deut. 17. 12. He that will not hearken, but do presumptuously, shall dye.* He being the Minister of the Lord: and indeed it is to cast off the Lord. I go not about here to establish a sovereign power in Magistrates, which is proper to God, to make what lawes they will, about civil, Religious, or indifferent things, and then people to submit to them for no other reason, but because of their will: under which notion, superstition in Churches hath been phsered and maintained, you must obey authority: in that case, it's better to suffer then to sin, and not to do, then do. But suppose the lawes just, righteous, holy, and for publick good, and that apparently so, and not in saying so only: Now here, to cast off lawes, is to cast off Christ.

There are two things especially, which are the cause and occasion of the breach of all other lawes; and the strongest and sweetest, which men, young men especially, the hopes of the Common-wealth, are careless with, *Prov. 2. 13, 16.*

- I. Whoredome, secret lusts and wantonnesse, and other strange lusts which I cease and dare not name, *1 Kings 14. 24.* The sin before *Shishab* came, a sin which many times

times *Salomon* cannot see thorow his window, nor the eye of authority discern; but *God will judge for us, Heb. 13. 5.* and if he be Judge, who shall be thy Jailor, but Satan? and what shall be thy sentence, but death? and what thy chaines, but a hard heart for the present, and horroir afterward? A sin which pollutes the very earth, the land, the very dust of the ground; and the cause of all sin almost in a place, as drunkenness, idleness, corrupt opinions, scoffing at the Ministers of God, and wayes of God: For I feldome knew a persecutor, but he was an adulterer, though it's not alwayes true; and in the end, poverty and ruine. And know it, though no mans eye has seen thee, no power of Magistrate can reach thee; this word shall be fire to consume thee, unless thou repent: for thy looks, thy lusts, thy dalliances, thy thoughts, thy speeches, thy endeavours this way, much more for the thing. Mans law shall not binde you here, because it cannot reach you; but know, that *Christ* is cast off by you.

2. Loose company, vain men, *Prov. 25. 3.*  
 4. A Common-wealth is a refined vessell of use for God, and judgement is established; when these are taken away, your knots of loose company. Take a poor souldier alone, he is as other men, but when they are got into a knot together; now they grow



strong against all lawes of God or men. So  
here, the knot of good fellowship hath bene  
the bane of the flourishing State of England;  
meeting in Tavernes and such places; and  
the cause of whoredome, and of all evil com-  
monly in a Nation. For hence; Much  
precious time is lost; which if spent in pray-  
ing, as in sporting with them, many a young  
mans soul had been blessed. Hence, some-  
times dicing, feasting, excessive drinking,  
merry tales, which take off all spiritual joy.  
Hence filthy songs, and lascivious speeches;  
by which hopefull young men are incorrupt,  
and taught to do wickedly; and so knit to  
them; that it's death to part with them,  
and it's better to burne a whole town, then  
to poyson one hopefull young man.

Next to communion with wanton wo-  
men, I have ever looked on unecessary  
fellowship with gracelesse men as the next.  
Well, know it, you cast off the Lords govern-  
ment from you by his servants, which will be  
sad to answer for another day. And as the  
Prophet said to Jehasaphat; Shouldest thou  
love them that hate the Lord? his wrath be  
against thee for this. So say I to thee.

Quest. 3.

Quest. 3. Inferiour power, when is it  
cast off, viz. in particular Cities or Townes  
by meaner persons?

Ans.

Ans. I shall expresse it in three things  
chiefly.

1.

1. When Souldiers in particular Townes,  
cast

cast off respect, care, conscience to the com-  
mands of their leaders for over them of God,  
and who under God are the walls of out-  
ward safety for the country; 'tis not now  
an artillery day, only I must speak a word,  
because it's a thing of moment, and matter  
of great conscience with me. I suppose, in  
such a place at least, according to the Cen-  
surious example amongst Heathens, *Mar.*  
*Solin* a word of a Commander to any of  
them should be a law. *I say to one, Go, he*  
*goes.* Now for men to come when they  
list to those meetings, and so time is lost,  
and when they do come, no care; I had al-  
most said conscience, to mind their work in  
hand, and do it with all their might, as it  
to which they are called; but Officers may  
speak, charge, cry, yea strike sometimes, yet  
need none, it's intolerable; but that Mem-  
bers of Churches, which should be examples  
to others should do this, at least it is but  
British folly. But I do wonder what rules  
of Conscience such do walk by, and if they  
do, where is their tenderneſſe to withdraw  
their shoulders from under the work? which  
if there be but English blood in a Christian,  
he will endeavour to be perfect in his Art  
herein; but if grace, much more; that he may  
make one stone in the wall, and be fit to  
shed his blood, if need be, for the defence  
of Christs servants, Churches, and cause  
of God.

2. When

2.

2. When any Town doſt caſt off the power and rule of Townſmen, let by the ſupreme Magiſtrate to make ſuch orders as may make for the publick weal thereof. I know ſometimes men may not be ſo able, wiſe, and carry matters imprudently: Town-orders may alſo ſometimes want that weight, that wiſdome, thoſe cautions, that mature conſideration as is meet, as alſo that due and prudent publication, that all may know of them, with records of them. But take Town-orders that be deliberately made, prudently publiſhed, for the publick peace, profit, comfort of the place, to oppoſe theſe, or perſons that make theſe, with much care, fear, tenderneſſe; If I know any thing, is a ſin of a crying nature, provoking God, and caſting off his government. I confeſſe, if there be not care here; I know no way of living under any government of Church or Common-wealth, if the publick affaires of the Town be caſt off. I know ſometimes godly and dear to Chriſt, may through weakneſſe, want of light, ſudden paſſion, and violent temptation, oppoſe here; but I am perſwaded if they be the Lords, he will in time humble them for it, and make them better after it.

I know the answer to two questions would cleare up all the doubts about this matter. 1. What prudence ſhould be uſed in making lawes? 2. How farre thoſe hu-  
mane

manie lawes and Town-orders binde conscience? But I cannot attend these: only six things I would here say.

1. The will and Law of God only hath Supreme absolute and sovereign power to binde conscience (i.e. to urge it or constrain either to excuse for doing well, or to accuse for sin; for conscience is at liberty without this) this is a truth urged by all orthodox Protestant divines against the Papists; so that no law can immediately binde conscience but Gods.

1.

1. Because he only is Lord of conscience; because he made it, and governs it, and only knows it; and hence he only is fit to prescribe rules for it.

1.

2. Because he only can save or destroy the soule; hath only power to make lawes for the soul to binde conscience. James. 4.

2.

12. There is one Law-giver, who is able to save or destroy. Isa. 33. 22. for the law which so bindes conscience to a duty that the breach of it is a sinne, and that against God: we know that the least sin of it selfe destroys the soul, bindes it over to death, but none have power to destroy it but the Lord himselfe.

3. Because the Law is sufficient to guide the whole man, in its whole course, in all the actions or occasions it meddles with, or takes in hand, even in civil as well as in Religious matters. Prov. 2. 5. wisdom teacheth

3.

eth every good path. *Psal. 119. 11. I have hid thy word, that I might not sin.* Whatever one doth without a rule from the word, is not of faith. Hence the word descends to the most petty occasions of our lives, it teacheth men how to look, *Psal. 131. 1.* how to speak, *Mar. 12. 36.* it descends to the plaiting of the haire, *1 Pet 3. 5.* moving of the feet, *1/a. 3. 16.* and what is of Christian liberty hath its freedome from the word: a man must give an account at the last day of every stirring of heart, thoughts motives, and secret words; and if so, then it must be according to the rule of the word: and hence the word only hath absolute power to binde Masters, Servants, and Princes, how they governe, and people how they subject, and this the Lord hath done to make men take counsel from him, and walk in fear before him, and approve themselves to him, especially Townsmen in their places not to consult without God.

2.

2. All good laws and orders enacted in any place by men, are either expressly mentioned in the word, or are to be collected and deducted from the word, as being able to give sufficient direction herein. For all the authority of the highest power on earth in contriving of lawes, is in this alone, *viz.* to make prudent collection and speciall application of the general rules, recorded in Scripture, to such special and peculiar cir-

cum-



cumstances which may promote the publick weal and good of persons, places, proceedings. *Prov.* 8. 15. *By me Princes decree justice.* *Ioshua* 1. 7, 8. *Do what Moses commanded, turne not on either hand.* *Object.* But I cannot see my way from hence alwayes. Meditate therefore on it much, and then thy way shall prosper, &c. Many things *Ioshua* did, not particularly set down by *Moses*, but may be collected from it. *Deut.* 1. 17, 18, 19, 20. *The King is to have it, that he may prolong his daies in the midst of Israel, in his Kingdome.* What made *Rehoboam* to turne from these wayes? he thought he could not stablish his Kingdome without it; that was therefore the ruine of him and his Kingdome.

1. This appeares, because the word is sufficient to direct, as hath been shewn; and hence all directions and rules are to be taken from hence.

2. Because either men have rules to walk by, or their own wills and apprehensions are to be rules, but not so, because mens wills are not only corrupt; but it's a peculiar prerogative to God to be obeyed, because of his will. The reason or wisdom which makes a rule, binds; which if it be right, is part of the law writ in the heart, which is most plainly seen and fully opened in the word, whence direction is to be had.

3. Humane

I.

2.

3.

3. Humane lawes or orders thus, either set down in the word, or deducted from the word, and applied by those that be in place in Townes; though they do not binde conscience firstly, as humane, or by humane power, (i. e. as published and imposed by man;) yet they do binde secondarily, i. e. by vertue of the Law of God, wherein they are contained, or from whence they are deriued and deducted, and according to which they are opposed; they are like *subpernal* in the Kings name, or writ of arrest, which by vertue of higher power challenge obedience; And thus to break these, is to sin against God; and makes the conscience liable to punishment from God. And the reason is,

1.

1. Because men sin hereby against the Lord, and his holy righteous law. because Gods law is contained in these; and what is deducted from the word, is Gods word. *1 Sam. 8. 7. They have not rejected thee, O Lord, but they have despised thy word.*

2.

2. Because they sin against the power of the Magistrate hereby, and against men in place, and so against more means; *Rom. 13. 2. He that resisteth the power, resisteth the Ordinance of God. i. e. when they command thee according to God, which the Lord takes very ill; and the meaner the power is (as in Townes) the more terrible will the Lord be, when he comes to visit for it;*

hence

hence they receive to themselves damnation,  
both by God and men.

¶ It is true, if they be not that according to  
the word, but rather against the general rules  
of it; though men in Townes and places  
are not to be obeyed; yet subjection is their  
duty even then; i. e. not to refuse obedi-  
ence with contempt of their persons, places,  
power, or scandal to their proceedings, or  
profession of the Gospel. *Revile not the  
Lords high Priest; speak evil of no man;* but  
either come in private, and conferre with  
them; and hear what may be said; and  
be willing to give and take reason.

¶ 4. Humane lawes and orders may be  
known to be according to the word, when  
they command or forbid such things, as re-  
ally advance or tend to promote the pub-  
lick good.

¶ This ladde to answer that great question  
in many forpalous mindes. I cannot see  
(so ignorant) when an order is collected  
from the generall rules of the word; now  
this conclusion answers that doubt: For  
look as the maine work of men in place, is  
to promote publick good; (and hence pub-  
lick-spirited men are to be chosen for it) so  
the principal rule is that which God and his  
Word gives them to walk by: whatever  
really doth tend to the advancement of that;  
Publish that; record that; and execute  
that; *Rom. 13. 4. He is Gods Minister to  
thee*

thee for good: i. e. for the publick good. He is for mens private good, but 'tis in reference to publick good; that as private persons are to attend their work, so publick persons publick good. Hence, 1. If a law be made for publick hurt, that law is not of God.

2.

2. Hence, if the law be made only for the private good of themselves, or any particular person, and hurts the publick, that is not according to God. Admirable was *Joshuas* spirit herein, *Josh.* 19. 49, 50.

3. If lawes be only in appearance and pretence for publick good, and not really, they binde not; none must do evil, much lesse make a law of it, for publick good. Nothing more usuall then to make evill lawes and orders, crossing Gods law, and to pretend publick good; which ever prove the publick pests and plagues, and cankers of that place, as *Jeroboams* command for Religion. Somethings are forbidden plainly, they make not for publick good, but hurt, *the statutes of Omri*. Other things are indifferent in their nature, as swine to go abroad, or to be shut up; but inconvenient in their use, and hurtful and scandalous, and that really to the generall. They are not for publick good, whatever is pretended; somethings are plainly commanded, they are for the publick good circumstantiated; some things are indifferent in their nature, but

con-

convenient and comfortable in their use, those are indeed according to God. And such things may be discerned, they are so obvious and sensible, of such necessity and such profit, when duly considered by persons not blinded with their private interests.

4. Hence things indifferent, which may as well be left undone as done, and so publick good no way advanced, are not of God that any should restrain them: For the liberty which Christ hath purchased by his blood, and which Gods law gives, no law of man can abolish, or take away. It's the cry of the claw-backs of Princes, that they have power in things indifferent, such things which make as much for publick good, not to use, as use; the truth is, he hath least power here; because they are idle and idoll-worship, no hurt, nor is there good in them: And hence, some of the most rigid School-ticks maintain, such lawes binde not conscience: we are not to seek our private only, nor all humane lawes are helps to seek publick.

5. That lawes made for and according to God for publick good, if they do not destroy some mens particular, only for some time pinch and presse hard upon his particular good, or their particular good, men are bound in conscience here to submit. True, 1. If it were possible, all lawes for



publick good, should hurt no particular man, and Townsmen, if they can; should help those that are hurt; yet because no lawes, but usually they will presse on some mans particular; the heaviest end of a staffe that is to be borne, must fall on some mans shoulder, and such lawes must be made. Hence a man is to bear and submit chearfully, i. e. from the rule of love, which will abate of particular for the general good; love that more then mine own. 2. The law of justice, a man is to do as he would be done by; there is no man, but if his good was advanced by the general, but would be content that some particular should be pinched. 3. The law of nature: The stomach is content to be sick, and body weak, to heal the whole body. Hence Christians should not think that Townsmen are carelesse, unjust, and aimed at their hurt, when it is thus. 1. King. 12. 4.

6. A meere Penal law when 'tis broke; the forfeiture is sufficient for the satisfaction of the offence, or trespassse; but not in a mixt law.

1. First, A Penall law is about things of small moment.

2. Secondly, 'Tis not made by way of command, but with an *ant*, a *disjunctive capitulum*; and is indeed rather a proviso then a law.

3. Thirdly, It is in the minde of the law, make satisfactory if the penalty be payed, though

though the law be not performed, because the publick good in the minde of the Law-maker is known to be set forward that way as by obedience to the law. In these cases penalty is enough: but if the law be mixt, *i. e.* there is a command it shall be done; and Law-giver is sad, though penalty being paid, as being about a matter of weight; it may be the livelihood and comfort of men, as keeping hogs out of corne, and peace in a town. that there be no complaining; here the penalty will not satisfie, because this is no penall law, but a law indeed deducted from rules of the word of God; as it is in theft, he that steals, shall pay four-fold; or he that brawles, shall be duckt in the water: Suppose one should say, I will suffer my servant to steal or revile; I hope 'tis no offence if he suffer the penalty. Yes, but it is, because it is not a meeke penal law; the thing is of weight, peace between neighbors, so peace in a Town. It's a flat charge not to break it, and thou knowst such is the honesty and justice of a Magistrate, that he will say, I would rather you would never do thus, then offer those to do. Hence in Gods law Christ must suffer, and do also, because Gods law is not meerly penal; but doing the thing gives more content then the punishment.

3. When servants cast off all subjection to their Governours. Families being the

Tit. 2. 9,

10.

1 Pet. 3.

18.

Eph. 6. 5.

members and foundations of Townes, and so of Common-wealths. When they are not obedient; but answer again; if they they be let alone, then idle; if rebuked and curb'd, then stubborne and prond, and worse for chiding, and finde fault with their wages, and victuals, and lodging; weary, and vex out the heart of Master and Mistresse, and make them weary of their lives, and their God also almost sometimes; and that by such professing Religion, and all that they might be from under the yoke.

And here I cannot but set a marke upon servants broke loose from their Masters, and got out of their time, that are under no Family nor Church-government; nor desiring of it, or preparing for it; but their reines are on their necks. I confesse, if under heathen Masters, then desire liberty rather; but when men will live as they list, without any over them, and unfit to rule themselves; I much doubt, whether this be according to God.

1.

1 Hence they come to live idly, and worke when they list.

2.

2. Hence men of publick use, can have little use but when they please of them.

3.

3. When they be with them, they have no power to correct or examine, and call them to account, in regard of spirituall matters.

4. Hence

4. Hence they lye in wait to oppresse men that must have help from them, and so will do what they list.

4.

5. Hence they break out to drunkenness, whoring, and loose company.

5.

6. Hence they make other servants unruly, and to desire liberty.

6.

Now examine and try these things: Is the Kingdome of Christ come into us? that though there be a law in our members warring, yet there is a law of the minde warring against it, and delighting in the will of Christ, and setting him up as chief. Are we under the Kingdome of Christ in his Church and Common-wealth; so as the soul is willing in the day of the Lords power, though there be, and have been some pangs of resistance against persons and against Ordinances; so as 'tis thy liberty to be subject to Christ in his Ordinances, in his servants; and 'tis thy bondage to be otherwise, and thou longest for that day, that the Lord would subdue all those boistrous lusts, and pride, and passions; and bruise sin, Satan and self under thy feet? Then I say, as the Lord, *Isa. 33. 20, 21, 22. Look upon Zion, the City of your solemnity, &c.* See *Rom. 8. 7, 1.*

But if the heart growes loose and licentious, and breaks the Lords bonds and yokes, and will be led by your own fleshly ends and lusts, and so go on quietly: Be you

assured, this truth shall have a time to take hold of such spirits; and know it assuredly, 'tis not to be in Christs Family or Kingdome; 'tis not scrambling for promises, catching at Gods grace, talking of assurance of Gods love; which will shelter you from the wrath of *the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; to Whom God hath sworne, That every knee shall bow.* 'Tis service and subjection which the Lord aims at, and which the Lord looks for. I know 'tis Gods grace which only can save; but it will never save when it is turned into licentiousnesse.

Do not say, There is no danger of it, here where we have such means, and such liberties are.

*Answ. 1.*

*Answ. 1.* Never such danger of being licentious, as in places of liberty; when no bit nor bridle of externall tyranny to curb in.

2.

2. Look on the Kingdome of *Judah* here, which in one year all fell.

3.

3. Why doth the Lord exercise us with wants and straits? 'tis to humble us, and abate our unrulinesse. And 'tis the Lords quarrel with his best people to this day; desperate rebellious hearts, that close not with his Government.

Do not say, we know not how bondage should come here, though we should cast off the Lords Government.

*Answ. 1.*

*Answ. 1.* The Lord can let loose the natives



tives against us. *Ahab* kills 1000000 of *Benbadads* men, but afterwards within seven yeares he returnes again.

2. The Lord can raise up brambles, and *Ahimelechs* to be the King of the trees, when the Olives and the Vines are loth to forsake their places, and to lose their fatnesse and sweetnesse. 2.

3. The Lord can turn the hearts of those in power against people, and let Satan sowe suspicions, and sowe seditions and clashinges. 3.

4. The Lord can leave us into one anothers hands to oppresse, to take away the nether millstones. 4.

5. If none of these, Satan, nay Christ himself will come out with garments dipt in blood. 5.

3. Do not say, 'Tis not so, there is sweet subjection, i. e. 'tis so, and blessed be God for it, yet beware, I speak to prevent. But yet 1. Some seem to do so, and yet are not so, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. *Mighty to pull down every high thought*, who attaines this, who can be thus? yet there are meanes mighty for this end, not that all be abolished, but all are abolishing. 2. Others otherwise, openly how zealous for an opinion, when it should be death to differ, and things in your own heart lying miserably waste, and some wretched lust the root of all, for which Gods Saints mourn in secret. Let such know,

that will not be ruled by Christ, or his servants or ordinances, but will have them to rule them, and not to be ruled by them. The Lords chains are near, and therefore now take your time and come in, submit to the Lord, and do as these here did, acknowledge the Lord to be righteous, and turn unto the Lord.

Use 6.

• Use 6. Of thankfulness, for our present liberties and freedom from the bondage of men, bondage of conscience, bondage of Satan and sin: need there is of laying this use seriously to heart, considering two things principally. 1. The general complaints of the Countrey, as they of *Jericho*, 2 Kings 2. 19. *The waters are bad, and the ground barren*, and these are engraven in marble, all other our liberties are written on the water. 2. The disgrace and reproach cast upon Gods people and wayes of God, and that unjustly, which I am afraid to mention; whence there grows a contempt of them, and the rivers of *Damascus* now are better then *Jordan*. Oh beloved, if it be an heavy hand of God to be under bondage, then look on it as a special grace of God to free us from bondage. *Deut. 32. 11, 12. The Lord alone did lead them, &c.* and *Moses, chap. 33. 29.* when he had blessed them, *Happy art thou Oh Israel, a People saved by the Lord.* And the greater cause we have to do this, a People that have abused all liberties.

Jer 2. 20.

*Isa.*

*Isa. 9. 8, 9, 10.* He laments it, but yet is thankful for it to Gods grace: no man that can say but he may be as holy as he will, and none to curb or snib.

1. Means, Consider what all the liberties Gods people enjoy have cost, *Gal. 5.* *Christ hath made you free, i. e.* by his blood. Liberty of Conscience from the bondage, not of Jewish, but of Antichristian Ceremonies, and Government, and Pressures: Liberty of will from any sin; 'tis by Christs blood and cost, that (as I am perswaded) our liberties have cost Saints their blood. The teares, prayers and blood of men are much; but of Christ much more, and are they not worth thanks that are of this price? The great reason why unthankfulnesse comes in, is; because they cost so much, as losse of estate, of wife, or of childe by sea; dost thou repent now? Christ doth not repent that his blood hath been paid for them; and if they be of so little value; as there 'tis said, *He repented that he made man*, so may he that ever he gave them such glorious liberties.

2. Consider oft of the sad condition of them that be in bondage. Men in bondage prize liberty, and think them happy that enjoy it; but men out of it do not. How sad is the consideration of them that be in bonds, it will make thy heart sympathize with them, and blesse God for your deliverance,

vengeance. Hence saith Christ, *Luke 22. 20. When you see Jerusalem compassed with enemies, &c. flie to the mountaine, and waite to them that give suck.* Consider them that are taken with the Turks; if you were in their condition you would say so; to bring forth little ones to the murderer or idolater, *Isa. 42. 22. and 20.* Mens hearts failing for feare, this you should see somewhere. A mote or a thorn is a little thing, but no man would have it alwayes vexing for all the estate he hath, if he hath any eye or tenderneſſe in it; so those small matters for which the Saints have suffered, and for which God is provoked, and under which some have roared, and others have been loaded one after another; 'tis worth a world; oh, blesse God for it: but consider those that be under the dominion of sin and Satan, so strong and miserable; sinne so dear, that there is not so much as a sigh under that; be thankful for that.

3.

3. Labour to maintain in the heart a holy feare of abusing liberties, every one in his place; for what makes them despised, but principally the abuse of them; in such a Congregation there was such contention, such affront to the Elders, there is that degenerating of spirit, and back-sliding from God, that men grow worse under meanes then ever, I and so must be if men grow not better. *Deut. 6. 10, 12.* The Lord exhorts

exhorts them, that when they be at liberty, they would not then forget the Lord, but then feare. 'Tis *Luthers* note on the place: *When in trouble, you rejoyce; but when in peace, you feare.* I'll only name the sins of liberty.

1. Take heed of a Prayerlesse spirit, and that that lamp go not out. Men under some pressures cry, and 'tis long before they do cry under them, and under their sin; but then at last they do, and when the Lord gives liberty, though they have the guilt of the same sins, and more sins lie on them, yet then like Marriners, when the stormes are over fall asleep. Its strange that *Israel* under *Pharaoh* cried, and under Gods afflicting hand in denying them water murmured. True thankfulness will help to prize what liberty affords.

2. An unloving spirit to the Saints. It's that I have oft said; souldiers when they are set against a common enemy are all one, but when at liberty, then they sling javelins at one anothers heads, differ in opinion, and in heart and affection, and 'tis not death so to do. Take heed of a rigid, censorious, unloving spirit.

3. Extreme ignorance how to use our liberties; and hence running to extremes. As we say of Christ, There is good enough in him, but men know not how to fetch and improve it: so there is great advantage in liberties,



liberties; but men misse of it through their ignorance and abuse. Hence many times more hurt done by an Admonition then by the sin, when administred in passion, and without compassion. Hence under pretence of liberty extream licentiousnesse.

4.

4. Imperiousnesse of spirit, arising from a frothy emptinesse, and an overweening opinion, and conceitednesse of their own abilities and wisdom above others: and hence will not be led, (being at liberty) by the Councel and Advice of others. It's natural for man to affect sovereignty, and when the time comes of liberty, then it hath a vent: *Who made thee a Lord and Judge over us?* though in bondage, much more in liberty; they think Wills Commonwealth is in their heads chiefly, and hence will not be ruled by Gods ordinances; and hence if once taken with an opinion, hardly ever removed, &c.

5.

5. Resting with liberties and in liberties. *We were never in bondage*, John 8. 33. *yet servants to sin.* *We be Abrahams seed*, better then all the world; yet under all the power of sin and Satan, and must not be told of their wayes, but hate them that censure them for their sins. Men in bondage are like sick men, that will cry if they were in another bed, oh then they should be well; but they must first be cured of their disease.

4.

4. Make use of liberties. He that hath them

them, but sees not so much glory in them, or gets not much good from them; he will be no more thankful then one that hath large grounds, may walk at liberty, but the trees for want of manuring bear no fruit, nor ground corn through sloth; such a man will starve there. Look as they, *Deut. 15. 5, 10, 11.* they were to bring the first fruits, & present them before the Lord, and rejoyce in all: so should you if ever you be thankful for them, bring the first fruits to the Lord, and think there is more behinde, and more in heaven.

*Object:* But our outward straits are many, and temptations sad.

*Answ.* If Christ himself should come on earth, what would you have with him? would you have him come and set up an earthly Paradise? would you have better entertainment then he, who had not that which foxes and birds had? or would you have him come from his Crosse, and then you will make him King? if you despise his ordinances and liberties because of wants, you would despise himself if he were present. But you will reply and say, What if we can have both? If that can be, and Christ calls to take both, refuse not his love. But it may be an heavy indictment against some at the last day, in that they forsake Christ, because he is poor and naked; for they are therefore called to cloath him: and this will be your Peace, and you will be no losers.

*Object.*

*Answ.*

losers your selves another day.

2.

2. Suppose he doth keep us low; yet *Psalm*. 145. 13, 14. His dominion is alway, and raiseth up all that are bowed down. Oh be humbled; he is said, *Deut.* 32. 13. to make the people such honey out of the rock, and oile out of the flint, sweetnesse and mercy out of the hardest condition.

3.

3. They that are not recompensed for their enjoyment of liberties, by the spiritual refreshings which the Lord gives, shewing them more of their own hearts; the Lord proclaims liberty to them to depart. I am perswaded the whole Countrey would flourish the more.

4.

4. Lament rather your own vilenesse, who in the midst of all mercy, know not how to use, but abuse our liberties: and hence the Lord forsakes us; as *Ezra* 9. 8, 10, 11. *What grace hath been shewed us? what shall we say, that after this, &c? Wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hast consumed us?* *Psalm*. 81. 13, 16. Oh that my People had heard my voice, I would have subdued their enemies. God would not be wanting unto us, if we were not to him.

Take therefore that example to imitate, in *Acts* 9. 31. *Having rest, they were multiplied:* if we be not so, truly, as none have the like liberties; so no bondage so sad, no where such poverty, no where such anguish of conscience, no where such spirit and

power

power of sin, no where such sad anger; if in practice we be unthankful, or can mouth and speak against long Sermons, and against the Countrey and Christians, or in hearts undervalue them; and when you see *Indians* rise, *Brambles*, *Abimelechs* and *Shebnas* raised, &c. then know this is for abuse of liberty.

*Use 7.* Of exhortation to come under Christs Government; and be in his service; lest ye come to know the difference between is and some other by experience.

*Use 7.*

*Mot. 1.* You must be either under Christs yoke, or Satans and sins; and so all other miseries: and therefore as *Joshua* said; so say I to you; Choose you whom you will serve.

*Mot. 1.*

*Mot. 2.* Consider the difference between the service of the Lord and *Shishak*.

*Mot. 2.*

*1.* The government of others, tyrannical proud men, or sin or Satan, or outward miseries; 'tis full of rigour, force and cruelty. *Ezek. 34. 4.* With force and cruelty have ye ruled them. But Christs Government is there shewen to be in mercy, and full of mercy; though sometimes lost, he will fetch thee in again; though sick and weak, he will heal thee again; *vers. 16. Dent. 4. 6.* 'Tis for thy good the Lord hath no need of thy service, &c. True it is, the Lord may shew his people hard things, and give them sad miseries; but these wounds do not kill them

*1.*

losers your selves another day.

2.

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Take therefore that example to imitate, in *Acts 9. 31. Having rest, they were edified:* if we be not so truly, as none have the like liberties; so no bondage so sad, no where such poverty, no where such anguish of conscience, no where such spirit and

power



power of sin, no where such sad anger; if in practice we be unthankful, or can mouth and speak against long Sermons, and against the Countrey and Christians, or in hearts undervalue them; and when you see *Indians* rise, *Brambles*, *Abimelechs* and *Shebnas* raised, &c. then know this is for abuse of liberty.

*Use 7.* Of exhortation to come under Christs Government, and be in his service; lest ye come to know the difference between it and some other by experience.

*Mos. 1.* You must be either under Christs yoke, or Satans and sins; and so all other miseries: and therefore as *Joshua* said, so say I to you; *Choose you whom you will serve.*

*Mos. 2.* Consider the difference between the service of the Lord and *Shishak*.

1. The government of others, tyrannical proud men; or sin or Satan, or outward miseries; 'tis full of rigour, force and cruelty. *Ezek. 34. 4. With force and cruelty have ye ruled them.* But Christs Government is there shewen to be in mercy, and full of mercy; though sometimes lost, he will fetch thee in again; though sick and weak, he will heal thee again, *vers. 16. Dent. 4. 6. 'Tis for thy good the Lord hath no need of thy service, &c.* True it is, the Lord may shew his people hard things, and give them sad miseries; but these wounds do not kill them

*Use 7.*

*Mos. 1.*

*Mos. 2.*

1.

them, only make way for healing the distempers of their hearts, that are in his poor weak ones; and his end is to bring them to himself.

2.

2. Their government is in it self hard and bitter. To serve a lust now, 'tis a torment, sometimes to conscience, if that be awake; if not, 'tis a curse of curses: much reluctancy against it; much chiding after it; and God hides himself; dreadful fears, and heart it self unquiescent; but Christs yoke is easie and his burden light; his assistance, and presence, and love, and peace makes it so, and that daily, and at death especially.

3.

3. There is little recompence for their service; the best that *Saul* can give, are Olive-fields and Vine-yards; but anguish of conscience after the work is done: But the Lord gives a Kingdome; and not a word or thought, but there is a book of remembrance writ; not a cup of cold water, or rag to any of Christs naked servants, but it will be recompenced. *You have followed me, you shall sit on thrones.*

Mot. 3.

1. Mot. 3. Consider how faine the Lord would have you under his Government; for many will say, I have refused so oft; and what shall I now do? the Lord will cast me by. True, he may do so, and you may be glad if the Lord will honour you in doing his work. Yet, *Prov. 2. 23. Returne you scornners at my reproof, and I'll power out my*

Spirit

*Spirit upon you. Jer. 36. 3, 7. Read (sayes God) the words of the Roll to them: It may be they will hear, and present their supplications before the Lord, and turne every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. Read the place if you can without tears. You that have departed from God and Christ, and provoked Gods wrath, when there is but little hope left it may be; Oh, yet read the Roll.*

*Mat. 4. Once Christs, and under his Government, you shall never be cast off; As sin hath reigned unto death, so shall grace reigne unto eternal life, Rom. 5. 21. He will bestow on you the sure mercies of David, by an everlasting Covenant, Isa 55. 5.*

*Quest. But wherein should I submit to the Lord?*

*Ans. None have power to rule conscience but Christ, give him therefore this glory, that wherein he bindes conscience; conscience not out of fear, but love may indeed submit. I have instanced the particulars formerly, yet more distinctly. There be two great commands or charges of Christ, that ly upon all mens consciences to whom the Gospel comes, and therein lyes our service of him generally: Which two I name, because there we think we are free, or do not know our liberty.*

*First, The command of Christ is, that every one to whom the Gospel comes, and*

*Mat. 4.*

*Quest.*

*Ans.*

*t.*

*L*

*is*

is preached, do believe, i.e. receive Christ Jesus in all his fulnesse in the Gospel. *John* 1. 12. For that is to believe; in which command lies Gods offer. *1 John* 5. 23. *This is his commandment, that ye believe*, *John* 6. 25, 37, 38. *This is the work of God that ye believe*. Now here men think they are free.

1. They say they are unworthy; and hence they say, Depart from me, Lord, I am a sinfull man; as if Gods grace was built on mans worthinesse.
2. Because unhumbléd, whereas Gods grace calls in men unhumbléd, *Rev.* 8. 17, 18. For Gods call and offer is general, though none but the humble wil hearken to it. But there are none, but it may be said to them; If they can believe, let them.
3. Because Christ is not theirs, and are they bound to believe he is? Whereas the first act of faith, is not to believe Christ is mine, then men were bound to believe a lie. But to receive Christ as a woman her husband, that he may be mine by faith; and so a man may know and say, he is mine. The Gospel doth no where say to any man, Christ is thine; but if thou receive him, he is thine, and consequently the Spirit speaks so also.
4. Because they cannot believe, unlesse they should presume; as if the Gospel bound the conscience of none to believe, but them that were able to believe it, and receive Christ in it; yet 'tis otherwise: for it bindes all to receive Christ Jesus; to go up and possesse him.

him, to feed, eat and drinke, and live for ever. And I will leave this one undeniable argument; If men are liable to eternal condemnation at the great and last day, and to bear the eternal wrath of God and Christ also, for disobeying the Gospel, for refusing Christ and the offer of his grace therein: Then those mens consciences are bound to obey the Gospel; i. e. to believe and receive Christ now in this life. — But all that have the Gospel preached to them, are liable to eternall condemnation, for disobedience to it. *John 3. 18, 19. Psal. 2. 12. Kisse the Son, lest he be angry. So, 2 Thess. 2. 8, 9. He comes to render vengeance on them that obey not the Gospel. Rom. 2. 16. The Lord shall judge the secrets of all hearts by my Gospel.* That is, wherever the Gospel comes; for they that have no law, having no law shall not be judged by it: But men that have had the Gospel, shall be judged by it, and therefore are bound to obedience thereunto.

The serious consideration of which one truth, is enough to draw all to Christ from the power of unbelief; especially they that say, I cannot, or ought not to believe. For the reason why men do not come, is,

1. They think the Gospel concerns not them; what doth the Lord say to me, come so vile, and sinful? yes, that he doth; if there was no such law, there



could be no transgression or condemnation.

2. 2. They think they shall presume. No, if conscience be bound to it, 'tis no presumption, to keep a Sabbath aright, or to receive Christ as God offers him: Oh, this quiets conscience.

3. 3. The Lord layes his chain on the most tender place of conscience, as it will answer it at the great day, or will have any peace; take heed, you refuse not so great salvation.

4. 4. 'Tis a chaine, not of bondage, but of liberty, and mercy, and love: Come and receive, not a Kingdome; but Christ, Peace, pardon, and grace freely; which may draw the heart, as it will at the great and last day. *Come ye blessed, take a Kingdome;* take a Christ prepared for you from before the foundation of the world. Oh that this might sound in your eares: This is the first and cheifest; without this, all your obedience is hypocrisie, and abominable; but this will please, and then all poor obedience shall please.

2. Secondly, Love unto the whole will of Christ; especially to that part of it, to love those that be the members of Christ. Some Christians as they believe, and feeling a heart so crosse to Christ, and the will of God; think they are from under the government of God and Christ, and so from under the

the

the grace of Christ, (and the argument is strong, if true;) but why not under his government? because they finde daily a spirit so crosse to the will of Christ; and hence under continual fears of condemnation. Oh but consider, hast thou no love to the will of Christ & law of God? (for if any believe, this is found in him) if so, then under Christs Government. *Rom. 8. 2. The Law of the spirit of life hath made me free.* What is that Law? See *Chap. 7. 23, 24.* Spirit of delight in the Law in the inner man, and mourning for contrary captivity. Know therefore, though you cannot do all; yet love the whole will of God, and mourn where you do not; and then say Now no condemnation. Do not say, 'Tis impossible. Oh, here is mens wo, and triall of subjection to Christs will! How do you love it, love his Sabbaths and Ordinances, because of his love to you? How do's this constrain you?

In particular; Love the people of God, that is his speciall commandment, 1 *John 3. 23. John 13. 34.* But now the want here of, or the contrary hereto: As when a man shall become: 1. A Distaster. 2. A Contemner. 3. A Censurer, and whisperer. 4. A Scoffer. 5. If met on a Bridge, an opposer of the Truths or servants of God. This is that which kindles wrath, and wherein the inward venome of hypocrisie appears.

peares. There's many duties neglected, and not that spirit of prayer, and holy conferences amongst Christians; yet do you keep love to them; that what you cannot do yourselves, yet you love others that can do it, and account it your blessednesse to be like them, and daily mourne under your neglects; that in every thing, the Gospel is not adorned by you: and on the other side, although you have many duties, Sabbaths, and good acts; yet if not love, all is vile. I fear 'tis not mens joy, sweetnesse, delight to hear the least good word that falls from a good mans lips, but rather the truths and things of God despised; if so, then look for wo. And for Members of Christ, their lives not desired, their deaths not lamented; but you know how to contend, and are carelesse though the Gospel and God be slandered; you cast off the Lords yoke. It was one mans speech, that the great sin of this Countrey will be hatred of the Saints, a scornful contempt of them: It will come by degrees, first distaste, and then censure and contemne. Oh, but if herein you submit, herein Christ is honoured, and Gospel glorified in love and amiablenesse: Not in a rigorous austerity of spirit, and diabolical censoriousnesse; but in word and deed, countenance and gesture, comforting and encouraging one another.

When

When David would know what to do; Truly saith he, my goodnesse extends not to thee; but to the Saints, in whom is all my delight; Oh therefore submit here; this conscience calls for, and Christ must have.

To conclude with a word for help here:

*Means 1.* Look to Gods Ordinances, not as they be in themselves; but as appointed of God, to communicate an almighty power of spirit to them that wait on the Lord in them. An almighty power must overcome, and go on conquering, and to conquer. How shall we have this by Gods Ordinances? Some more principall, as Word and Sacraments; some lesse. How shall we partake of this power in them? Look not on them in themselves, but as appointed and sanctified, and so as glorious. And there pray and wait, and look for the power; nay, believe you shall receive this power. As the waters of Jordan to Naaman; How did they cleanse? When he lookt upon them without the command and promise, he despised them, and so found not the benefit of them, but afterward he found the benefit of them, when he washed seven times in attendance to the appointment of God. Brethren, it is but go and wash here.

1 Cor. 10. 5.

*Means 2.* Know your disobedience, the breadth of it. Some things Christians see, and

*Means 1.*

*Means 2.*

pray against them, and then all is well; but see the bredth of evill in your disobedience. There is something that doth oppose God in every lawfull thing, in whole or in part, (for flesh is in it) or else you are blinded if you see it not. Oh therefore feel the bredth of evil in it; that being sensible of, and humbled under, and striving against your continual disobedience; every thought may be brought into subjection and obedience to Christ.



Of







# OF Ineffectual HEARING.

JOHN 5. 37.

*Ye have neither heard his voice  
at any time, nor seen his  
shape.*



Rom the 31. *Vers.* to the end  
of this Chapter. Our Saviour  
proves that he was the *Messi-*  
*ah* to come, from four testi-  
monies.

1. From the testimony of *Iohn*; the first,  
yet the least, yet very strong and full,  
*vers.* 32. 33.

I.

2. From the testimony of his works,  
greater then that of *Iohn*, *vers.* 36.

2.

3. From the testimony of the Father,  
by his voice from heaven, *vers.* 37.

3.

4. From the voice of the Scriptures, the  
highest of all, and surer then a voice from  
heaven. (2 *Pet.* 1. 19.) *v.* 39, 46.

4.

Now

Now these words are annexed to the third testimony, which I told you is the voice of God from heaven, set down *Mat. 3. 17.* For this testimony of the Father is not the inward testimony of the Spirit only; Because Christ speaks of publick, and evident testimonies in this place; nor is it meant of the testimony of the Father in the Scripture; for that is a distinct testimony: and though the Father doth testifie of Christ in the Scriptures; yet 'tis not as his testimony, no more then the testimony of *John*, and of his works, whereby the Father did testifie also: Nor is it probable that our Saviour would at this time, omit that famous testimony of the Father at his Baptisme; which if it be not here, is no where in this *Chapter.* Beside, how is this testimony the Fathers more then the Spirits; but then, being called his Son, he did evidently declare himself to be the Father that spake. Lastly, the Spirits testimony is spoken of, as the testimony of *Moses* and the *Prophets.* *Vers. 46, 47.* For had ye beleaved *Moses*, ye would have beleaved me, for he wrote of me, *vers. 47.* For if ye beleave not his writings how shall he beleave my words.

Now our Saviour in these words, answers an *Objection*, which the *Jewes* (ever conceited of their own knowledge) might make. We know the Father as well as you; and yet we know no such testimony that he gives;

gives. Christ answers, You do not know him; for the certain knowledge of a thing, is either by seeing or hearing; now you never saw him nor heard him; you have therefore no acquaintance with him.

So that the words contain 1. Christ's fearful accusation of the Jews to be ignorant of God. 2. The aggravation and extent of it, at no time, i. e. not only at Baptisme, but at no other time, in any Ministry, or in any Scripture, &c.

*Quest. 1. What is it not to see his shape nor hear his voice?*

*Quest. 1.*

*Ans.*

*Ans.* Some think they are metaphorical speeches, to expresse their ignorance of God; Now though this be the scope, and the general truth, yet I conceive, the Lord speaking particularly, and knowing what he spake, intends something particularly; and it is a rule, never to flie to metaphors, where there can be a plain sense given. There is therefore two degrees of true knowledge of God in this life, or 'tis attained unto by a double meanes.

1. By hearing of him, for hence our faith comes by the Word.

1.

2. By hearing thus from him, the mind also comes to have a true *Idea* of God, as he reveals himself in the Word and Means by the Spirit, *Iob 42. 5. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee;* and this is the *shape* here spoken of, not bodily

2.

dily and carnal. Now Christ doth professe that they did want both. Carnal and unregenerate hearts, neither hear Gods voice, nor have a right *Idea* of God in their mindes, but become vain in their mindes, though they have meanes of knowing, and their foolish hearts are darkned; the wiser they be, the more foolish they grow.

2.

2. *At no time*, i.e. neither at baptism, nor else in any mans Ministry, nor in any of the Scriptures which you read, and where the Lord speaks.

3.

3. But did they not hear the voice of God at Christs baptism, and at the Mount when Christ preach't, when the Scriptures were opened every Lords day, and at other times amongst them?

*Answ.*

*Answ.* No, they never heard it. It's a strange thing, that such men that read, heard, preach't, remembered the Scriptures, and could tell you mysteries in titles, never heard the voice of God; and yet it is most true.

*Observ.*

*Observat.* That many men may a long time together know and heare the Word of God written and spoken, yet never hear the Lord speaking that Word, no not so much as one word, title or syllable; no not so much at once, at any time. This was the estate of the Jewes, and this is the estate of all unregenerate men. Hence Christ, Luke 19. 41. laments and weeps over Jerusalem, saying,

*Ob*

*Oh that thou hadst known in this thy day, &c.*

1. *Quest.* How did the Jewes heare, and yet not heare God speaking?

*Ans.* There is a twofold word, or rather a double declaration of the same word. 1. There is Gods external or outward word, containing letters and syllables, and this is his external voice. 2. There is Gods internal word and voice, which secretly speaks to the heart, even by the external word, when that only speaks to the eare. The first the Jewes did hear, at Christs Baptism, in Christs Ministry, and in reading the Scriptures, and when they did hear it, it was Gods word they heard, full of glory, and so they heard the word spoken, but only man speaking it: the other comes to few, who hear not only the word spoken, but God speaking the word, *Rom. 10. 18, 19. Israel did hear, but Israel did not know.* Christ speaks in parables; Hence *in seeing they did not see*, *Luke 8. 10.* And this is one way, how 'tis true that Christ sayes, *They never heard his voice.* As 'tis with a painted Sun on the wall, you see the Sun and Stars; but there is a difference between seeing this and the Sun and Starres themselves, wherein is an admirable glory: go to a painted Sun, it gives you no heat, nor cherisheth you not; so it is here, &c.

2. This inward word is double. 1. Ineffectual, (though inward.) 2. Effectual.

1. In-

1. *Quest.*

*Ans.*

2.



1. Ineffectual, is that which hath some inward operation upon the heart, but it attaines not Gods end to bring a man into a state of life; and thus, *Hab. 6. 2, 5. Many tasted of the good word of God, yet fell away.* And such a heart is compared to a field which a man plowes and sowes, and raine falls on it, and yet the end is not attained, *it brings forth thistles*; and this many Jewes did hear, and hence had some kinde of faith in Christ. 2. Effectual, is that which hath such an inward efficacy upon mens hearts, as that God attaines his end thereby, *Isa. 55. 11.* and brings men to a state of life, of which Christ speaks, *John. 6. 45.* and this voice none but the Elect hear; and of this Christ speaks here, as appears, *verse 38. Him whom he sent, ye beleeve not.* Hence it is you have heard God at no time. Hence he speaks of such a hearing and knowing, such a hearing outwardly, as is accompanied with such a hearing inwardly, *Joh. 14. 17.* so that many men may hear the word spoken outwardly, but never inwardly: they may hear it inwardly, but never effectually, translating them from state to state, from death to life, from life to life and glory. No sense of the Majesty of God speaking, nor effectual hearing of the word spoken. When the Sun is down the Moon may arise, but yet a man is cold and dark; but when the Sun ariseth, oh it warmes, nourisheth and che-

cherisheth, &c. *nothing is hid from it*; so it is here, when the Lord speaks inwardly and effectually to the heart.

*Reas. 1.* From that great distance and infinite separation of mens soules from God, that though God calls, yet they can't hear no more then men a 1000 mile off. *Eph. 2. 1 men are dead in sin.* Now what is spiritual death, but separation of the soul from God, & God from it. A dead man cannot hear one word at no one time, he was not dead if he could. Mens minds are far from God, & hearts also, that they are neither stricken with the sight of his glory, nor sense and savour of his goodnesse, but must be vaine, and have worldly hearts in the Church, nay adulterous eyes, or if they listen, God is gone from them, and from his Word also, *Hos. 5. 6.*

*Reason 1.*

*Reas. 2.* From the mighty and wonderful strange power of Satan, which blindes their eyes they cannot see nor hear, *2 Cor. 4. 4.* never such clear light, never such an effectual Word, as that of the Apostles, yet it was hid; why? *The God of this world blinded them,* either he will keep such a noise and lumber in their heads, that they cannot hear God speaking for the noise, or else turn himself into an Angel of light, and speak, and by their light will blinde them, that the light in them shall be darknesse. *Rom. 1. 22.* When men with natural light began to be most wise, then they became

*Reason 2.*

*Rev.* 12. 9.

*Rom.* 1. 22.

*Reas.* 3.

came the greatest fooles: so 'tis with o-  
ther knowledge of Scripture, and things  
they heare. Happy were it for many a man  
if he had never heard nor seen; for that  
which he hath heard and seen keeps him  
from hearing. *Tyre* and *Sidon* would hear  
sooner then *Capernaum* that heard most.

*Reas.* 3. From the righteous judgement  
of God, in leaving men to be blinded and  
made deaf, from and by the means where-  
by they should hear and know; that as it is  
with the Saints, all evil things are for their  
good, so all good things are for their hurt,  
*Isa.* 6. 10. the meriting cause is unbelief  
and sin, but the deep and hidden rise of all  
is Gods eternal dereliction of them, God  
never intended love, special love to them;  
hence he never speaks one word to them;  
*2 Cor.* 4. 3. *John* 6. 65. *Many were offended  
at his words and forsook him.* Now to take  
off this offence, I said, *None can come to  
me, except it be given him of the Father,*  
what is that? see *vers.* 45. and 37.

*Use* 1.

*Use* 1. Hence see the reason, why the  
Word is so wonderfully ineffectual to the  
soules of many men, that it never stirs them,  
that it's a strange thing to them; it's *Heb.*  
12. 19, like the law, a voice of words, a  
sound of words, so they hear men spake,  
but understand no more then if they speak  
in a strange language, or if they do, it con-  
cernes not them; or if it stirs, 'tis but as

the blowing of the winde upon a rock, which blusters for a time; but when the winde is down they are still. Truly they hear the word spoken, but they do not hear God speaking. They heard *Latimer* speak, but not God speaking, they hear a sound, which every one sayes, and they think is the word, but they hear not God speaking it.

One would wonder that those Jewes that heard *John* and his disciples, *Moses* and the Prophets, nay Gods voice from heaven, saying, *This is my sonne*, that they should not hear this, and receive him with all their hearts, but they did not hear his voice. One would wonder to see, that such things which a gracious heart thinks, this would draw every heart, yet remaine not stir'd, things which the devils tremble at, and others which Angels wonder at, yet they hear not. Oh they hear not God speak, they are dead in their graves, farre from God; and there they are kept by the mighty power of Satan, like one in a deep dark cave, kept by fiery dragons under the ground, and the tombstone is laid upon them. If Christ spake he would make the dead to heare, and the blinde to see.

*Use 2.* Hence see why the Saints finde such changes and alterations in themselves when they come to heare; sometimes their hearts are quickned, fed and cherished;

M

healed

*Use 1.*

healed and comforted, relieved and visited; sometime again dead and senselesse, heavy and hardned. *Mark 8. 17, 18, 21. How is it ye do not understand?* Nay which is more, that the same truth which they hear at one time, should affect them, and at another time doth not; the same thing which they have heard a hundred times, and never stir'd them, at last should. The reason is, they heard the Word of God spoken at one time, but not God speaking; and they heard the Lord speaking that same Word at another time; the Lord is in his Word at one time, the Word goes alone at another time; as in *Eliab*, the Lord was not in the whirlwinde, but he spake in the *still voice*, and hence there he was to *Elijah*, *Luke 24 25. with 32.* not that you are to lay blame on the Lord; for he blows where he listeth; but to make us see 'tis not in outward meanes, nor 'tis not in our own spirits to quicken our selves; and to make us ashamed of our own darknesse, that when he speaks, yet we cannot hear, there is so much power of spiritual death and Satan yet within us, only out of his pity he speaks sometimes; not that you should despise the outward word; No, no, the Lord is there shining in Perfection of glory, and that which doth thee no good, the Lord makes powerful to some others. But prize the Spirit of God in that Word, which alone can speak to thee.

Use 3.



Use 3. Of dread and terrour to all unregenerate men. Hence see the heavy wrath of God against them: they have indeed the Scriptures, and the precious Word of God dispensed to them; but the Lord never speaks one word unto them. If any one from whom we expect and look for love, passe by us and never speak; What not speak a word? and we call to him and he will not speak, we conclude he is angry and displeased with us. You look for love, do you not? you that heare every Sabbath, and come to Lectures, and you must out; tis well: yes you will say, *His love is better then life*, and frownes more bitter then death; Love? wo to me if the Lord do not love me, better never been born. I hope he loves me. Happy I if the mountains might fall on me, to crush me in peeces if he loves me not, &c. but consider if he loves, he will then speak peace unspeakable to thy conscience when humbled, life to thy heart, joy in the Holy Ghost; *Isa. 57. 19. John 6. 63. 1 Thes. 1. 6.* but look upon thy soul; and see this day in the sight of God, whether ever the Lord spake one word to thee: outwardly indeed he hath, but not inwardly; inwardly also, but not effectually, *to turn them from darknesse to light, and the power of Satan to God, &c.* The voice of God is full of Majesty, it shakes the heart; 'tis full of life, it quickens the dead, and light, and

Use 3.

peace, and gives wisdom to the simple. *Pf.*

*119. Opening of thy word gives light to the eyes.* How many women, ever learning and never knowing, and many men learning and knowing what is said, but never heare God speak? Then know the wrath of the Lord, see and go home mourning under it. There is a fourefold wrath in this.

1. 'Tis the Lords sore wrath and displeasure, *Zach. 1. 2. with ver. 4.* If one should expect love from another to do much for him, and he did not, it may be he would not take it as a signe of displeasure: but if he will not do a small thing, not speak a word to him, oh this is bitter; what will not the Lord speak a word, not one word, especially when thy life lies on it, thy soule lies on it, eternity lies on it, especially the Lord that is so merciful and pitiful? this is a signe of sore anger.

2. 'Tis a token of Gods old displeasure, eternal displeasure; I know you cannot heare; hence though God speaks, you hear him not: but why doth not the Lord remove that deafnesse? you old hearers, that have eares fat with hearing, but heavy, he never intended love, else he would speak, there would be some time of love. *Rom. 11. 7, 8. The Elect have had it, others are blinded, as 'tis written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and eares that they should not hear to this day.*

3. 'Tis

3. 'Tis the Lords present displeasure. When a man looks for love and speech, and he doth not speak at those times he is not wont to speak; one may take it as no signe of anger: but when the Lord shall speak usually, and then he speaks not, this is a sad signe. 1 Sam. 28. 6, 15. He cries out of this, *He answers me not by Urim nor dreames,* nor thee by the Gospel nor Law, neither where he useth to answer. If this anger were to come, it were some comfort: but when 'tis now upon thee, even that very Sermon and Word whereby he speaks to others, but not a word to thee.

3.

4. 'Tis his insensible anger: for a fat heart and an heavy eare ever go together; for you will say, I feel no hurt in this, I have heard and been never the better, but yet that hath made me never the worse. Oh poor creature! 'tis because you feel it not; but when the time of misery shall come, you will say, This is wo and load enough, for the Lord to give no answer. *Psal. 71. 9. We see not our Prophets, nor any to tell us how long:* so you that despise meanes you shall then lament and say, none can tell how long. Oh therefore, lament this thy condition now, that the Lord may hear some of your cries, &c.

4.

Use 4. Hence examine whether ever you heard the Lords voice or no: not only outwardly (for that you know you have

Use 4.

often done) but inwardly; and not only so, for so ye may do, and yet your eares heavy; but effectually, that if it be not so, you may be humble and say, Lord how have I spent my time in vaine? and if it be so, you may be thankful, and say, Lord, what am I that the infinite God should speak to me?

There is great need of trial of this, for a man may reade, hear and understand externally, whatever another may; and yet the whole Scripture a sealed book.

There are therefore these three degrees, by which you shall discern the effectual voice of God, you must take them joyntly.

- I. The voice of God singles a man out, and (though it be generally written or spoken) speaks particularly to the very heart of a man, with a marvellous kinde of Majesty and glory of God stamp't upon it; and shining in it.

When a man heares things generally delivered, the blessed estate of the Saints, the cursed estate of the wicked, consolations to the one, curses to the other, exhortations to faith and obedience, to both, and a man sits by, and never thinks the Lord is now speaking, and means me. Or if it doth so, yet thinks he intends me no more then others, he heares not the Lord speaking; for when he speaks, he speaks particularly to the

the very heart of a man : he doth so fit the word to him, whether it be the Word of the law to humble him, or of Gospel to comfort, or of command to guide, as if the Lord meant none but them.

The word is like an exact picture, it looks every man in the face that looks on it, if God speaks in it, *Heb. 4. 12, 13. It searcheth the heart, verse 12. but verse 13. he speaks of God. how comes that in ? because God, the Majesty of God comes with it when God speaks it ; With whom we have to do, why is that put in ? because when the Lord speaks, a man thinks now I have to do with God, if I resist I oppose a God. Before this a man thinks he hath nothing to do with God, they are such strangers. Hence it is one man is wrought on in a Sermon, another not. God hath singled out one, not the other that day. Hence take a man unhumbed, he hears many things, and it may be understands not ; if so, yet they concern not him ; if they do, and conscience is stir'd, yet they think man means them, and speaks by hap, and others are as bad as they, and his trouble is not much. At last he heares his secret thoughts and sins discovered, all his life is made known, and thinks 'tis the Lord verily that hath done this ; now God speaks, 1 *Cor. 14. 25.* those things he did neither believe nor imagine ; *Sec. John 4. 29. See the man that hath told**



me all that ever I did. Hence take a soul that is humbled, he heares of the free offer of grace, he refuseth it; why, this is to all, and to hypocrites as well as to me. Apply any promise to it, it casts by all, it looks upon them as things generally spoken, and applied by man, but they hear not God speaking; but when the Lord comes, he doth so meet with their objections, and speaks what they have been thinking may be true, that they think this is the Lord, this is to me. *Hosea 2. 14. I'll speak to her heart: and hence 'tis called the ingrafted word, James 1. 21. like one branch of many, applied to the stock, Job 33. 14, 16.*

2.

2. The voice of the Lord doth not only speak particularly, but it goes further; it comes not only with an Almighty power, but with a certain everlasting efficacy and power on the soul. Thus 'tis here, *verse 38. I have not his word in you, they had it out of them; and not only in you, but abiding in you, 1 Pet. 1. 23. born of incorruptible seed, the Apostle seems to speak of a kinde of birth by corruptible seed, and such are like goodly flowers which soon wither, but you are born of incorruptible seed, which hath an eternal savour, sweetnesse and power, Mat. 13, of the foure grounds three of them fall away. John 15. 16. Their fruit does not remain: they have some living affection at the present, but they go away*  
and

and it dies. Look but upon particulars, doth the Lord once speak by the Word, and humble the heart? it never lifts up its head more; doth he reveal the glory of Christ? that light never goes out more. *Iſa.* 60. 19. *2Cor.* 4. 4, 5. As at the first Creation, there was light, and so continues to this day; so doth he give life, *John* 11. 26. You shall never die more; doth he give peace and joy? no man shall take their joy from them. *Iſa.* 32. 17. *Fruit of Righteousnesse and Peace, and assurance for ever.* Doth he give the Spirit of all these, which *Gal.* 3. comes by hearing of faith? it shall abide for ever, *Iſa.* 44. 17.

That look as Gods love is everlasting, so his words have an everlasting excellency and efficacy in them, and goodnes in them, the sweetest token of his love: and as Christs purchase is only of eternal good things; so the application of this purchase by the Word, 'tis of eternal worth: peace, but peace eternal, life, light, favour, joy, but joy eternal; like mustard seed, though very little, yet mighty in increase, and never subdued again; so that though it be but little, yet 'tis eternal: and hence observe where God hath spoken effectually, the longer the man lives, the more he grows in the vertue and power of the word; another though wonderfully ravished for a time, yet dies, most commonly outwardly in

in external Profession, but ever in inward favour; so that when you hear the word, and it moves you, affects you, and *John is a burning light, and you rejoyce therein, but 'tis but for a season.* The evil Spirit comes on you, and *David* playes upon his Harp, and Ministers preach sweet things, but as soon as the Musick is done, the evil Spirit returns, I say you never heard the Lords voice. The peace and joy of the Lord enters into Eternity, and the Apostle expressly calls him an unfruitful hearer, *James 1. 24. that sees his face and forgets himself.* A gracious heart may say, This peace shall go to heaven; and joy, and love, and fear, it's part of eternal glory.

3.

3. The voice of the Lord comes not only thus particularly, and with eternal efficacy, but with such efficacy as carries unto, and centers in Christ; so 'tis here: *For him whom God hath sent you believe not. John 6. 41. They shall be taught of God: where-in doth that appear? they shall hear and learn so as to come to me; if the law humbles them, it's such a humbling as drives them unto Christ, poor and undone, Rom. 10. 4. if the Word gives peace to them, 'tis such a peace which at the last they finde in Christ, Eph. 2. 17, 18. with 14. if it live holily, it lives unto Christ, not meerly as to God, and to quiet conscience, unto a Creator as Adam, but for Christs sake. 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. We judge that*

that if we were dead, and Christ died for us, we should then live unto him; if they grow up by the word, 'tis in Christ, Eph. 4. 14. though Christ be not mentioned, yet it is strange to see, let the word speak what it will, whether terrour; Oh my need of Christ! mercy and grace; oh the love of Christ! oh the blood of Christ! Command; Oh that I may live to honour Christ, and wrong him no more! Duties; Oh the easie yoke of Christ! They look upon the whole Word rightly dispensed as the Bridegrooms voice, and truly his words are sweet.

For a man may have some such feare, reformation, affection, as may continue, but never carry him out of himself unto Christ. The Pharisees knew the law, were very exact even til their death, profited as Paul said he did; yet they had not the word abiding in them; because not driven out of themselves to Christ, to rest there.

Hence when men shall hear many things, but to what end do you heare, or what vertue have the things you hear? Do they only please fancy for a time? or do you hear to increase your knowledge and parts? or do you hear for custome and company, and to quiet conscience? or are you affected and sunk, but not driven by all to lay thy head on Christ? the Lord never spake yet to thee; when the word hath laid you on this foundation, truly it's office is done and ended,

ended, Gods end is now attained, &c.

Oh try your selves here, have you heard, but never heard the voice of the Lord, rushing upon thee with Majesty, speaking to thy heart, and the very secrets of it, but have said, This is for others, and when you have thought the man hath spoken to you, your hearts have then swollen against him? or have you thus heard, but all dies and withers like flowers, the same heart still? or have you had some powerful stroke which remaines, but it forceth you not out of your selves to Christ, there to rest, there to joy, there to live, there to die? truly your time hath been spent in vain, you never yet heard the Lord speak. Oh mourn for it, thou art still in thy blood; if he never said Live; in thy bondage, if the Lord never said, Come forth. This is the condition of many to be lamented with teares. But if thou hast thus heard particularly, and though but little light, life and peace, yet it is of eternal efficacy, and all to draw thee to Christ; then blesse the Lord: *For blessed are your eares that hear,* and I say as Moses said, *Dent. 4. 32. Ask, if ever People heard God speaking and live.* The Apostle, *Heb. 12. 24.* makes it a greater matter to come to hear God on Mount Sion, and yet live; Blessed be God I live.

*Object.*

*Object.* But may not many of the Saints hear,



hear, and hear the Lord speak; but not feel this everlasting power and efficacy?

*Ans.* I would not lay a foundation of unthankfulness, nor discourage any; and therefore, note for answer these particulars.

*Ans.*

*1.* There may be an eternal efficacy of the Word, and yet ly hid, and not felt for a time. The Word is compared, you know, to seed, and that in this respect; the seed it is cast under the clod in the winter-time, and it hath a vertue in it to grow; but it is hid, and comes not to blade of a good while; and when it doth blade, yet it beares not fruit of a long time: So here, the Lord may cast the seed of his Word into the heart; but it is hidden for a time, it is not felt as yet, but there it is; a word of threatning, a word of promise, a word of Command; a man may cast it by, and say, It belongs not to me; a man may slight the command for a time: Yet notwithstanding, the Lord having cast his seed into the heart; it shall spring up. As many a childe, the father speaks to it, and applies the word home to it, when it is of some years; the childe regards it not: But now stay some time, till the Lord do bring it into some sad affliction; now a man begins to think, I remember what my father spake to me once, & I regarded it not then:

Now

Now this seed which was cast when the childe was young, it shall spring up twenty years after. *John 2. 22.* Christ had said, *He would destroy the Temple, and raise it againe in three dayes:* Now when he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that which he had spoken to them, but they regarded it not before; *These things,* saith Christ, *have I spoken to you whiles I was with you; but when the comforter is come, he shall bring all these words to your remembrance that I have said unto you.* One sentence it may be that hath discovered a mans sin, it lyes hid; but when the time of ripening drawes near, you shall see the word will have marvelous increase; and that sin it may be will bring to minde twenty sins; and that promise of God which gives but a little consolation, consider'd in it self, it shall give marvelous consolation. One would wonder to see what one word will do, when the Lods time of blessing it is come.

2.

2. After that a Christian hath had the feeling of the efficacy of the word, he may lose the feeling of it again, and yet the being of it may remain; and the reason is this, partly because there is not alwayes need of feeling the like efficacy in the word. A man may have by the word a marvelous deal of assurance of Gods love, and sence of mercy and joy in the holy Ghost, he may have this in the feeling of it: This word, it did ly  
hid

hid for a time ; afterward it springs up and gives him peace. But he loses his peace again , his Sun do's set , and it is midnight with him within twenty four hours, and he is as much in the dark as before ; Now the being of this peace is there , but he hath no need of the feeling of it at all times ; the Lord he will reserve that till some time of temptation, that he shall meet withall. As *Paul*, he had marvelous Revelations ; but *Paul* had more need of humiliation , then exaltation ; and there was not that use of *Paul's* having those glorious manifestations to him ; *I will glory in my infirmities* : There was need for *Paul* to know the evils of his heart , that he might walk humbly ; and it did not make so much for the glory of the Lord , as this that *Paul* should say ; I have this misery and darknesse, and sins , and yet Jesus Christ he will take away all : There was not need for *Paul* to have those joyes at all times, that he had at one time. So the Lord he gives a Christian joy and peace, now there is no need for a Christian to have it alwayes. *I will pour floods of water on dry ground* : Beloved , if there should be nothing but raine , raine every day and night, the ground would be glutted with raine, and so turned into a puddle ; but when the land is dry and thirsty , now the ground hath need of raine : Let the Earth make use of that raine it hath : and when it is dry and thirsty,

thirsty, I will give more, saith the Lord. So the Lord he gives the soul joy and peace; Now, if it should continue, the very peace and joy of God, would not be pleasant to the soul; or at least, not so pleasant as it will be, when the Lord takes it away, and gives it the soul again. A Christian comes to the meeting-house, and the Lord fills the sailes of a poor soul, that he wonders the Lord should meer him, and speak so suitably to him: But as soone as he is gone out again, this is the complaint of the soul, all is lost again; now the soul it falls a mourning again. It is not for the glory of God to give the soul such peace out of his Ordinances, as he doth in them; the soul it would not prize the Ordinances of the Lord so much; yet there it is; and when they come again, the Lord, he either gives them the same refreshings again, or else there is a new spring.

3.

3. The eternall efficacy of the word and voice of God; it may be preserved in an eternall spirit of prayer, for the continuance of it while a man hath it, and for the return of it when it is lost. *Pf. 119. 4, 5. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. David he knew his own weaknesse; yet he intimates with what power it came on his heart: Oh that my soul were directed to keep thy statutes; When the soul sees the beauty of a command, and the good will of God,*

how

how sweet it is, and how amiable the way and work of God is; *Oh that my heart were directed to keep thy statutes.* And so when it is gone, *Psal. 63. 3. My soul thirsteth after thee, Lord,* saith David, *that I may see thy glory and power, as I have seen thee in thy sanctuary.* He doth not say, that I may see thy glory and power in thy sanctuary, though that might be too; no, but *that I may see thy glory and power, as I have seen thee in thy sanctuary.* David he did finde a want of seeing him as he had done; yet the vertue of it did remaine in a spirit of thirsting, and desire: *My soul thirsteth for thee; as in a dry land where no water is, that I may see thee.* A Christian may have at sometime such a glimpse (in hearing the word) of Gods grace, of the exceeding riches of Gods grace, and the love of God to him; that he may be in a little heaven at that time; ravished in the admiration of that mercy, that ever God should look to him. It is so, and the word sayes so, and the soul is ravished with wonderment at it; yet God is gone again, and the soul loses it. Now the soul thinks, I have lost the efficacy of Gods word, but it is not so; for thus it may be preserved. Oh that I may see this God as I have done: And all his life-time the soul may finde the want of this, and yet it may be preserved in a spirit of prayer. For whom the Lord hath given once a glimpse of his  
N glory;



glory; the soul it cannot be at rest, but it breatheth for more of that mercy and presence; a Christian may finde his spirit marvelously refreshed at the word, he may taste how good the Lord is, and he may lose it again: but this may be preserved in a spirit of longing after this God, and presence again. And I will say this, Brethren, A Christian may finde no good by the word to his apprehension; he sees the admirable blessed estate of the Saints, and exceeding riches of God in Christ, sees the swetnesse of the wayes of God; goes home and thinks within himself, Happy they that are in this condition: Blessed are they that can walk thus with God; But I cannot, saith the soul. I say it may finde it thus, when he cannot finde the reall efficacy of the word as he would do; he may receive the benefit of that word, if the Lord do but only give him a heart to desire it. Oh that the Lord would but thus manifest himself to me; the soul may go away poor and hungry from the word, and the Lord may yet reserve a spirit of thirsting after that good which a man desires to finde; and there is the efficacy of the word there.

As now there are two golden vessels; one a man fills, and it is every day dropping, and he preserves it; another vessel he do's not fill, but with something that he hath, he is every day widening of it. So some Christians

stians, the Lord he's a filling of them; others, the Lord he do's not fill them with such peace and joy; ay, but though the Lord is not filling of them, he is a widening of them: there is such a vertue that the Lord do's enlarge the heart, with secret desires and longings after more of Gods grace, and Christs. The Lord he saith, I intend to make this man a vessel of glory; and I intend he shall have a great deal of glory and peace at the last. The Lord he leaves such an impression of the word upon him, as that thereby he enlargeth the heart; *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*

4. A Christian may have the everlasting efficacy of the word and voice of God preserved in a spirit of thankfulness and love to the Lord, for those joyes and good that it findes by the word sometimes. When it feels that the sweet and savour of the word is gone, a spirit of thankfulness and love to the word that doth remaine; The Lord he preserves the efficacy of the word in this way. *Psal. 119. 7. I shall, saith David, then praise thee with uprightnesse of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgements.* The Lord he may teach his people his righteous judgements; and the savour and feeling, and strength of them to their feeling may be gone, and yet it is preserved in a spirit of thankfulness and praise, that ever the Lord should shew it such mercy.

When the Spirit is gone, the spirit of love and thankfulnesse remains. As now a man hath heard the word, the Lord he hath effectually wrought on him, and changed his heart, and drawn him to himself; a Christian it may be he may lose those sorowes and humiliations, and the remembrance of those things; yet there remaineth to his dying day th's Spirit, he bleisseth God, and wondereth at God, that ever he should make the word effectual; that he should leave so many thousands in the world, and cast his skirt over him, and say to him, Live; this do's remain still.

Brethren, the Lord do's sometimes let light into a mans minde to discover his sin: now this light it do's not sensibly overcome the power of sinne: But now the soul bleisseth God for that word which hath convinced it; had I never seen my sinne, saith the soul, I should never a sought for power against it, and pardon of it; and this continues now, and cannot but continue; here is the efficacy of the word, the word of Gods grace, though the flower of it be gone, yet there is an eternal power of the word; that the soul can say, It hath come to me, and helped me against these sins; the soul wonders at the Lord, it should be so much as it is. So again, a Christian heales marvelous refreshings and affections, he is a hearing; when he is gone, he

findes not the same, but he blesseth God for those affections he findes, and there remains an eternall efficacy of the word.

5. The eternall efficacy of the word, it may be and is preserved, by nourishing, increasing and restoring the new man that is eternall. There is a double efficacy that the word hath; the first is to beget a Christian to life, and this new man is eternall. I conceive all the actions of the new man may be suspended, and the increasings of the new creature may be decayed, though God doth renew it again: But this never do's decay, it never dies: *He that is born of God cannot sin, because he is borne of God; and because the seed of God remaines in him.*

2. There is efficacy in the word when it hath begotten a man to nourish him up; and so the word it is food to him, that was seed to him to beget him, which food is eternal. How is it eternal? Is it in this, that now the sweetnesse, savour and remembrance of every thing that doth refresh him, shall last in it self? No, but in this respect it is eternall, in that it leaveth its secret vertue in the nourishing of that which is eternall. As now Adam when he was in innocency, and had an immortal body, his food it should have been an immortal food to him; but how should that have been? Should he alwayes have had the same strength, from the same diet, which he ate long before? No,

but in this respect it should have been an immortal food to him, in that it was to nourish that which was to be eternal: So it is here, the word of Gods grace it begets a man, it humbles a man, and drawes the soul to Christ; but afterwards, there are many things that God speaks to the soul in the word, that hath an eternall vertue, in that it doth nourish up the new creature; the word hath a secret vertue in it for this end. I will shew it you thus; *Isa. 58. 11.* The Lord he professes to his People, *Thy soul shall be as a watered garden:* The Lord will make the souls of his people like watered gardens, in peace, and joy, and life. Now look as if so be trees by water or by some springs that run by it, and slide away, and ye cannot tell, which it is that makes them to grow; yet ye know this, there is in all of them joyned together, a secret insensible vertue; that every one of them addes something to the flourishing of the tree: So it is here, the Saints of God, the word of God it comes to them, and passes by them; and ye cannot tell whether this part or that part of the word leave any vertue, but many times a man feels no vertue; yet it is manifest, here is a flourishing Christian, here is heart, and life, and peace that it hath with God, and the soul it remains flourishing; there is a secret vertue, all the words that run by and passe by the souls of Gods people,



ple, they do leave a marvellous vertue, to make the soules of Gods people like watered gardens, and to increase in grace. Note it by the way you that live under the means of grace, *your soules shall belike watered gardens*; if God have spoken to you first or last, the Lord speaks many times to you sometimes affecting, and sometimes warning, sometimes convincing and humbling, and speaking Peace, and there is a vertue that remaines, and if ye finde it not, know that God hath not spoken to you.

6. The eternal efficacy of the word may be preserved in a power of Conflict against the power of sin: for therein the Lords power of the Word does principally appear in this life, though not in a power of victory, I mean a compleat victory, yet an imperfect and incompleat victory, there ever is first or last, whereever there is a power of Conflict. I mean thus; the Word it singles a man out, and speaks to his heart, and sets him at variance with his sin, and with himself for his sin, and he joynes side with God in the use of all meanes, that his unbelieving heart and proud Spirit may be subdued; it sets him at variance with his sin; now there is many a Christian thinks there is no power of the Word: oh my unbelief continues still, and my vain minde, and I can finde little strength; no, ye must not look for a power of compleat vi-

6.

story, but yet there is a power of Conflict; God he sets the soul at an everlasting distance with his sin, never to be reconciled, and looks to the Lord, that by his Word and Spirit he would subdue them, that so he may see the death of them, and he sides with the Lord in the use of all means, comes to the Word, and comes to Prayer, and sayes, Speak against my sin, Lord; Lord, waste these distempers: and so the soul is thus at variance with his sin, although his temptations do get winde and hill of him, he goes again, and to them again: and though he perisheth, and never have mercy from the Lord; yet, Lord, that I may never sin against thee more, help therefore, Lord, by this promise, and mercy and meanes; and here he keeps him, and here he holds. Truly, brethren, here is an eternal vertue, and such a vertue as no hypocrites have, that have some sting of conscience, and after they have some peace, they are at truce with their sins. No, there is an everlasting conflict and warfare, and I do assure you there is an everlasting power gone forth. *Mat. 12. 20. Christ will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, till judgement come to victory;* Therefore there may be judgement, but it may not come to victory, there may be smoak and fire, and it may almost go out, and the Lord he blowes it up again, and at the last, though it be weak

weak and little, and he think with himself he shall never get strength again, yet the Lord will give victory in his time.

Only becautions here; I told you there is an incompleat victory, the Lord never sets his people at variance with their sin, but they have victory, but it is an incompleat victory, Saith the Lord, *I will drive out the Hittites, and Canaanites, and Perizzites before you, but I will do it by little and little.* There is many a Christian that findes within himself a Spirit of warfare against his sin, and did he examine himself, he should finde a Spirit of victory; but he thinks he hath none because his victory is not compleat. If he had a heart so to believe as never to doubt more, and such quickning as never to be dead more, never to depart from God more, now I should think the Word comes with power; but I finde that these evils prevaile against me. There is many a one does scorn the kindnesse of Christ, because he findes not compleat victory, but darknesse remaines still, and sinful lusts remaine still, therefore the Word doth me no good at all, saith he. The Lord he hath given thee a Spirit of Conflict, and hath set thee at an everlasting distance with thy sin, and he doth give thee some victory. Beloved, a Christian may decay in the power of the grace of Christ, which he hath received from the Word, and voice of God in the Word

Word, and he may decay and grow to a very low estate; yet he shall finde this, the Word of the Lord hath come with power to him, it will recover his soul again, and so the efficacy of the Word is eternal. *Psal.* 72. its said of Christ, that *his People shall feare him so long as Sun and Moon shall endure*, that is, continually, all their life-time. It may be said, there be many that finde decay of their service and obedience, and they lose their feare of the Lord, and their dread, and their humble walking before him, *He shall come as the raine on the mowen grasse*: many times a Christian hath his flourishing time as the grasse, but when the grasse is mowen, it is as a dry chip; so the soul it may grow dry, as dry as a chip. Now where is your sap and savour? but I tell you, if you belong to the Lord Jesus, the raine it will fall again, the Word of God set on by the Spirit of Christ, it shall fall upon you as the raine on the mowen grasse, and you know that it recovers little by little, and puts on a green coat again. Here is the eternal love of the Lord Jesus to his People, and thus the eternal efficacy of the word does continue.

3. Use.

3. Use is of exhortation. Oh Brethren and beloved in the Lord Jesus, may a Christian heare the Word of God spoken, and yet never hear God speak? may he hear it externally and not internally? then rest not

in

in external hearing, and with some little movings, and affections, and stirrings of the Word of Gods grace in hearing. Let not the Word be to you as the sound of many waters, and a noise, no efficacy of the Word that do remaine on your soules. Brethren and beloved in Christ, I lay my finger on the fore in these times. Oh the contempt of the Gospel of Christ, though I believe it hath its efficacy in the heart of the Elect: that is the thing that I presse, never be content with external hearing, though thou mayest have some affection, and know new things, unlesse thou finde the Lord speaking with an eternal efficacy to thy soul. I conceive two things are to be done, that the word may come with an everlasting efficacy; although something is to be done by Ministers; that is, to preach truth, and Gospel-truth, fetch't from heaven with many prayers, and soaked truth with many teares. *Ye shall know the truth, and that truth shall make you free.* Convicting truth. *We preach, saith the Apostle, in the demonstration of the Spirit. The Spirit of God when he cometh, he convinceth the world of sin.* Let Ministers do so. Preach convincing truth and Gospel-truth, fetch'd from heaven, and bathed in teares. Oh brethren, let the fire burn clear, let there not be more smoake then fire, it will never come with power then; convincing Gospel-truth,

set



set on by the demonstration of the Spirit of the Lord, and this will set a Christian at liberty; there is never such a Sermon that the faithful ones of God preach to you; if it come not with a power to loosen you and call you home; it comes with a power to blinde you: it is *an axe at the root of the trees*; but I leave this. What means ought the people to use, that the Word of God may come with efficacy?

Them that are in their unregenerate estate, the Lord only knowes how to work on their hearts; they must come to the outward meanes. I speak to the Saints of God, I leave others to the infinite mercy of the Lord; *It is not in him that willeth or runneth, but in the Lord that sheweth mercy.* In the use of meanes.

I.

1. Meanes. Do not only see thy infirmities and weaknesse, but pray to God to give thee a heart bleeding under the sense of thy many infirmities. Many times men slight them, and are not sensible of them; I do not say wickednesses and wilfulnesses, but thy infirmities and weaknesses, get a heart mourning under them. A Christian is made up of infirmities and weaknesses, a man would not think there is that in another, which he knowes by himself. Oh brethren, labour for a broken heart in the sense of your many infirmities and weaknesses, darknesse and enmity, vanity and unfavourinesse,

favourinesse, the Lord will have his time to speak to such a soul. *Break up the fallow ground of your hearts, — lest my wrath break out with fire:* the Lord hath promised *to dwell with the poor and contrite.* Look as it was with our Saviour Christ, they brought the sick and the lame ones to him, and vertue went out from Christ to heal them all. Bring thy sick and blinde heart to Christ, and vertue shall go forth from Christ to heal it.

2. Draw near to God in the Word, by looking on it as God speaking to thee. We are far from God, and therefore we cannot hear him: draw near to him when you come to the external Word, when you come to heare the Word, heare it as the voice of God; *You heard the Word as the Word of God,* which you felt in you. I do not speak that the soule should take every thing that Ministers speak as the Word of God, but that which is the Word of God, take it as God speaking. I am not able to expresse the infinite unknown sweetnesse, and mercy, and presence of God, that you shall finde thus coming. I know it is a common truth, but I am not ashamed to tell you, I have not for many a year understood this truth, and I see but little of it yet; ye have heard of it, but ye do not understand what it is to hear God speaking. When God hath an intent to harden a mans

2.

1 Thes. 2. 3.

mans heart and to damn him, either he shall have a prejudice against the man, or else if he hath not a prejudice against the man, there is a secret loathing of the truth, in regard of the commands of it, and that is all, and the Lord he hardens, and blindes, and prepares for eternal ruine, all the men in the world by this meanes, that live under the meanes. When the Lord spake to *Samuel*, *Samuel* heard a voice, but he heard it not as spoken by God, but when he took *Elies* counsel, and saw it was the Lord that spoke; now he listens to the voice of the Lord, and now the Lord opens all his minde to him.

3.

3. Do not trust to the external word. It is a heaven on earth to hear the Word exalted, a glorious thing to hear the Word of God as Gods Word; but trust to the free grace of God in it, and the Spirit of God in Christ to set on that Word. When they brought the lame, and blinde, and halt to Christ, they looked for the Word and the Power of it; *Speak the Word, Lord, and thy servants shall be whole*; so bring your blinde, lame, and halt soules to Christ, and trust to the free grace of the Lord Iesus Christ. *The Work of the Lord it shall prosper in his hand*; so the Word of the Lord, it shall prosper in his hand also.

Lastly, so seek the Lord, and so heare the Word, so see the truth, and so hear the truth, as that you lay up your happinesse in this

this world, in closing with the truth and with the word. Brethren, what is a mans happinesse in heaven, but to close with God and Christ? I cannot come to God now, the most that I can have of God now is in his word; if it be happinesse in heaven to close with God in Christ, truly then it is a mans happinesse to close with God in his word on earth; and if it be your happinesse, lay up your happinesse in it. *My son, saith Solomon, if thou wilt hear my word, let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thy heart; place thy happinesse in them. So shall they be life to thy soul.* Neverthelesse Brethren, let a mans soul be set upon any thing in the world, when he comes to hear, besides the word; if he lay not up his happinesse in closing with the word; truly, the word it will be like a song to him. The Prophet *Ezekiel* tells them, *Their hearts were gone after their covetousnesse*: When a man comes to hear a Sermon, there is a Sermon and the Market, there is a Sermon and a friend to speak withall; and so many young people will go abroad to hear Sermons; What is the end of it? It is, that ye may get wives and husbands many of you; but it is not your blessednesse to close with the Lord in his word. I have known some men that have had a distaste against the truth of the Lord; and I have known them  
for

Prov. 3.

Vers. 22.

for many a day, they have not been able to understand the truth of the Lord. When it shall be thus with a man, that a mans heart is set on something else besides the word of the Lord, that it is not my happinesse to close with the truth of the Lord; such a man shall never understand the truth of the Lord. Though the word be sweet to you sometimes; if your blessednesse do not lye in this, to enjoy God; Oh this Gospel of God, and these Commands of God, that your blessednesse do not lye in cleaving to the Lord in his word; I say, it is a certain truth, you shall be blinded and hardned by the word: For here is a Rule; Whatsoever a mans heart is set on, as his chiefest good, the presence of that good it comes with power: So here, the precious Gospel of Christ, when the presence of it commands the heart, nothing is good enough for it, and it closeth with it, and with Christ in it.

I beseech you therefore, Beloved in Christ, set upon the use of these meanes. think within your selves; What if the Lord had left me without the word? I will tell you what ye would have been. Look upon these poor *Indians*, herds of Beasts; look upon others on their Ale-benches, enemies to the Lord, such a one thou hadst been.

This blessed word and woice of God, every



very little of it cost the blood of Christ; written all the lines of it in the blood of Christ. Oh, make much of it, and it will make much of you; it will comfort you, and strengthen you, and revive you; and if the word come not with power, ye shall be under the power of something else; if not under the power of the word, then under the power of some lust. What is the reason that these poor creatures, that are come to the tryall for life and death, that have fallen into such sins as were never heard of? What is the reason that they are under the power of their lusts? I will tell you what Solomon saith, *My son, if wisdom enter into thy heart, and discretion be pleasant to thy soul, it shall keep thee from the strange woman, & sinful companion.* If it be pleasant, here is the reason, the word of Gods grace it never came with power, or if it came with power, powerless the word of Gods grace hath been to them; and because it hath not come with power, the Lord he hath given them over to the power of their lusts, and sinfull distempers. Oh Brethren, truly I cannot see how any man can maintaine any evidence of Gods electing love; that shall hear and hear, and good dayes mend him not, nor bad dayes paine him: that can commend a Sermon, and speak of it; but that efficacy is not known to him, neither doth he mourne for  
O the

the want of it; but the eternall efficacy thereof is a stranger to it. *1 Thes. 1. 5.* Knowing, saith the Apostle, your election of God; How did he know it? For, saith he, *Our Gospel came not to you in word, but in power; ye will rejoyce the hearts of your Ministers, when the word comes with power. Let me say this, and so I conclude.*

I remember the Lords threatening; *I will take away the staffe of bread, and ye shall eat, and shall not be satisfied; When the Lord shall let men have the word, when the Lord shall not take away the word, but the staffe of the word.* Suppose you poor Parents, Fathers, and Mothers; your families should have good Corne, but when you come to eat it, no strength at all, but ye dye and weare away; and others that are about you, they have planted the same Corne, and eat and are satisfied; What will ye do in this case? You would set apart a day of fasting and prayer; and say, Good Lord, what a curse is upon me? my poor children are dying before me, others have the staffe of Corne; but my Family have no strength at all. Ye would mourne if it were thus with your poor Cattell. Oh, for poor Creatures to have the word, but the efficacy of it to be taken away; no blessing, no power at all.

Oh

Oh poor Creatures, go and say! Oh the curse of God that lyes on me, the wrath of God that lyes on my servants, it is a heavy plague. But Oh the sweetnesse and excellency of it, when a Christian shall finde everlasting vertue and efficacy conveyed to him by the word.

All you that are before the Lord this day, ye shall see an end of all perfection; but eternall things are not they worth something? You shall see an end of all delights and contentments; but this shall comfort you when you are a dying, that the word which you attended upon the Lord in, such peace, and such consolations I have found by it; and the efficacy of that word then remaines with you; nay, goes to heaven with you. *I commend you therefore to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up unto an eternall inheritance amongst them that are sanctified;* Acts 20. 32.

FINIS.





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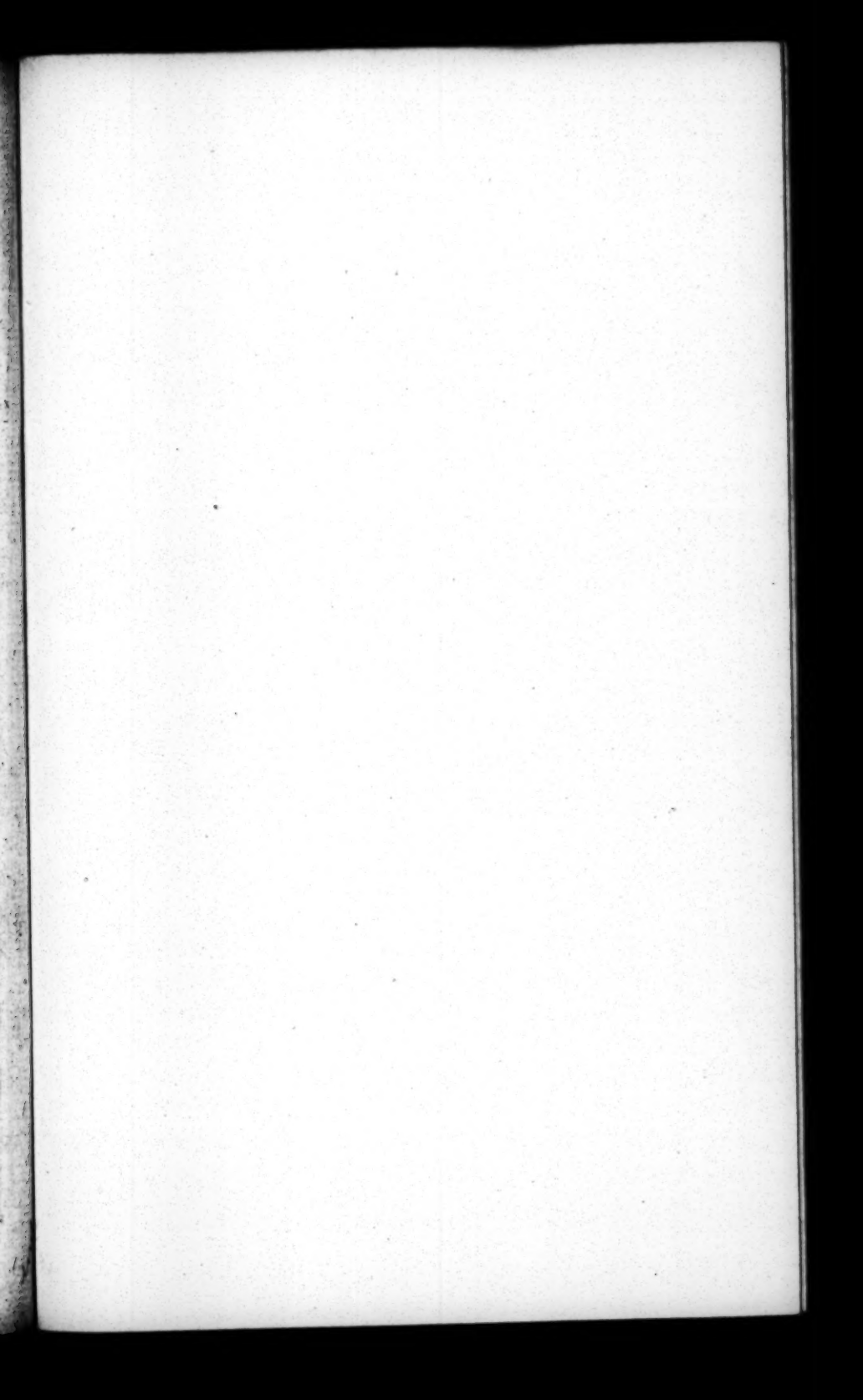
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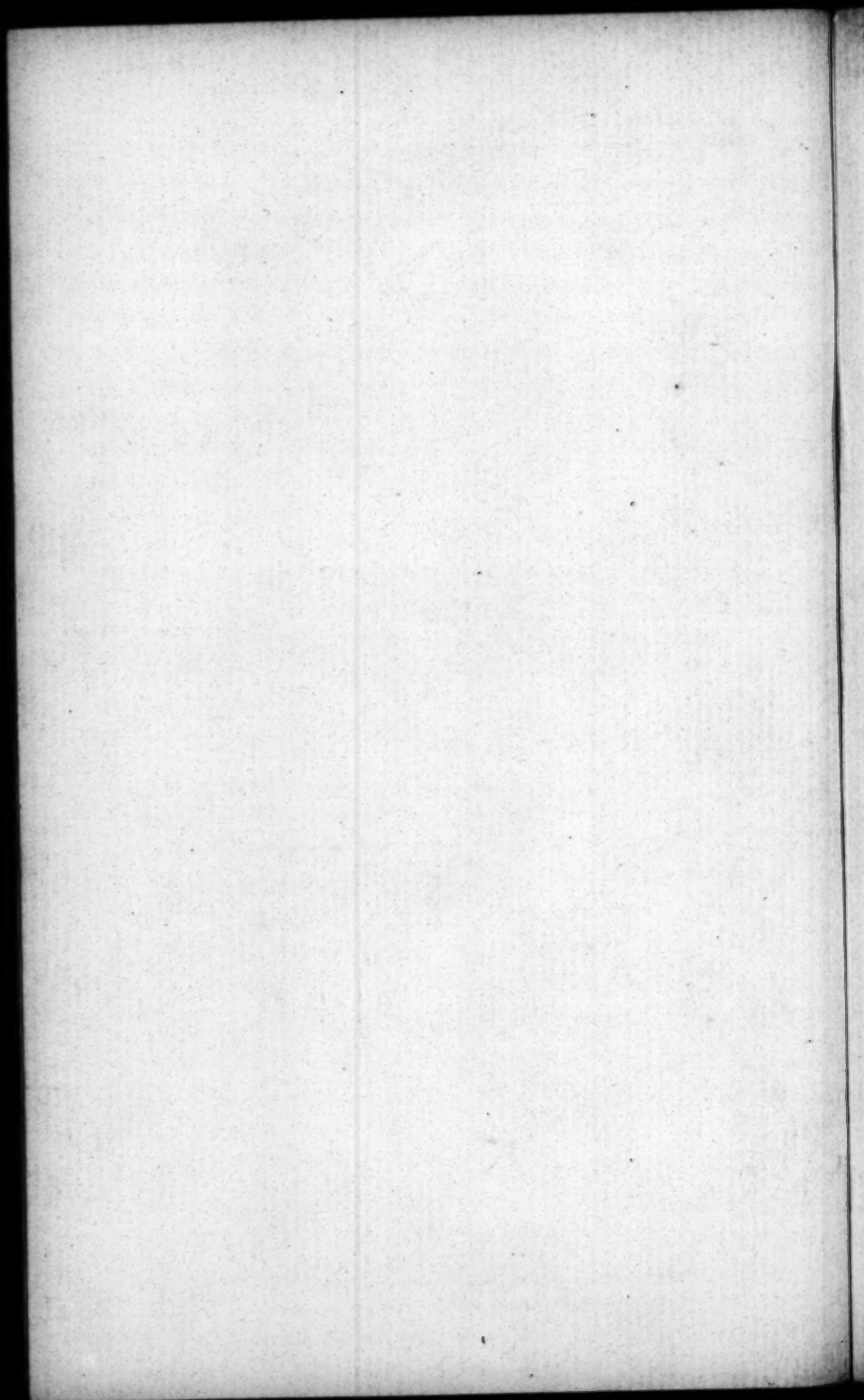
*The comfort of the Word remains till death;  
yea, unto eternal Life.* ibid.

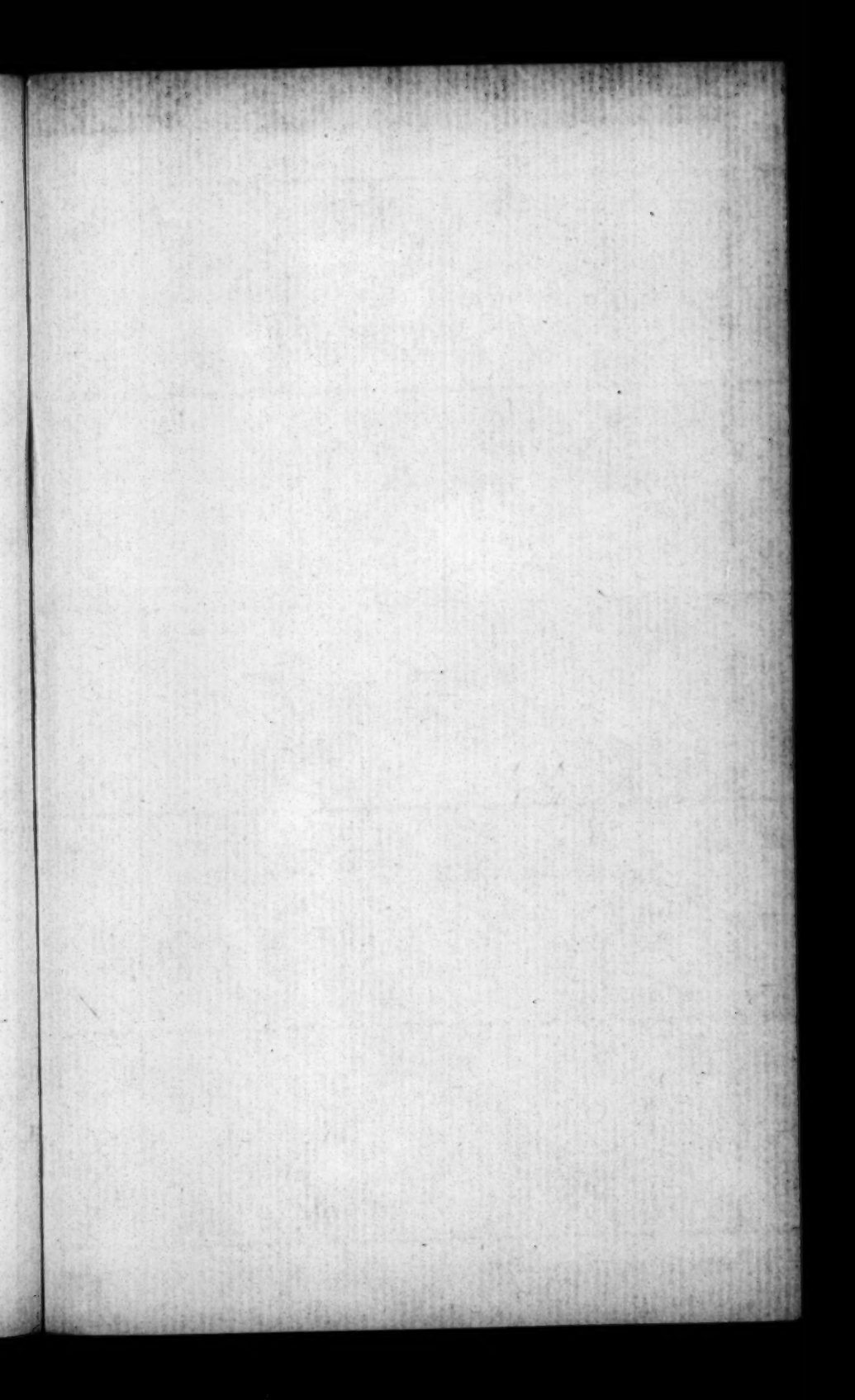
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